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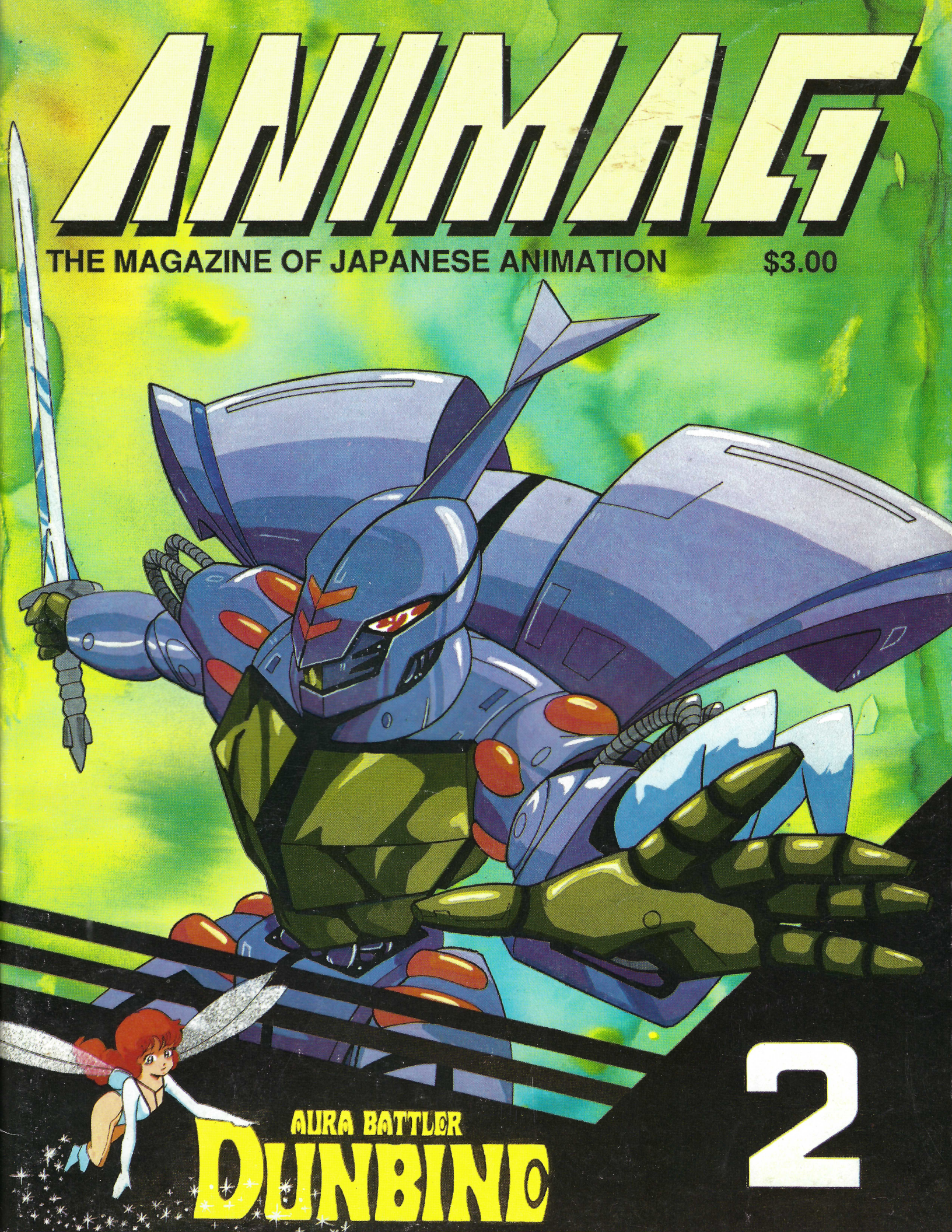

AURA BATTLER

DUNBINE

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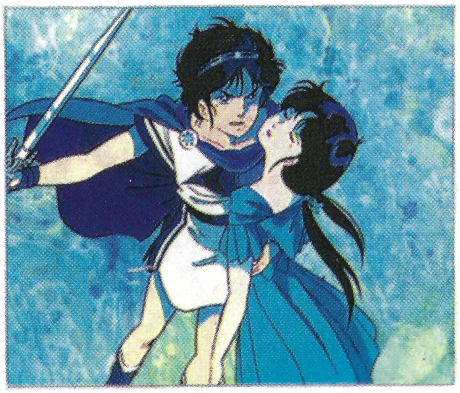
ARION

ANIMAG

THE MAGAZINE OF JAPANESE ANIMATION

ISSUE 2
VOLUME 1

2 ARION



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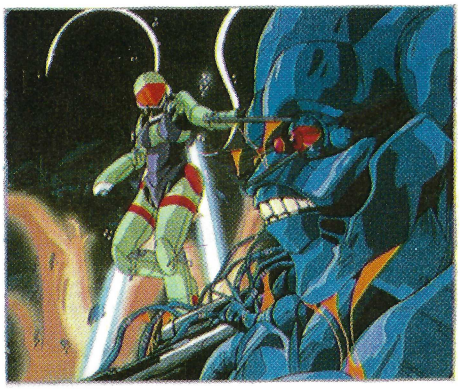

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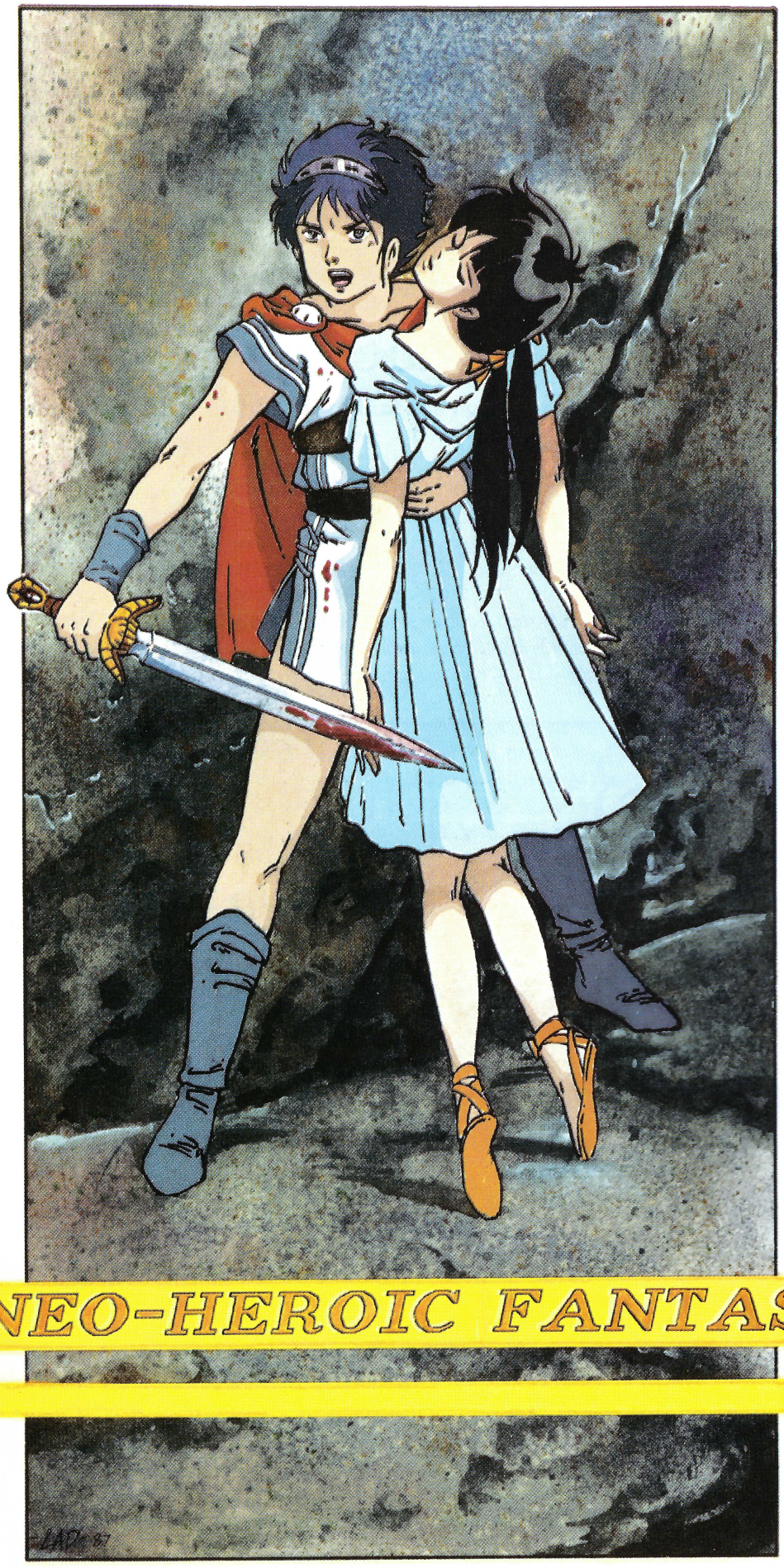
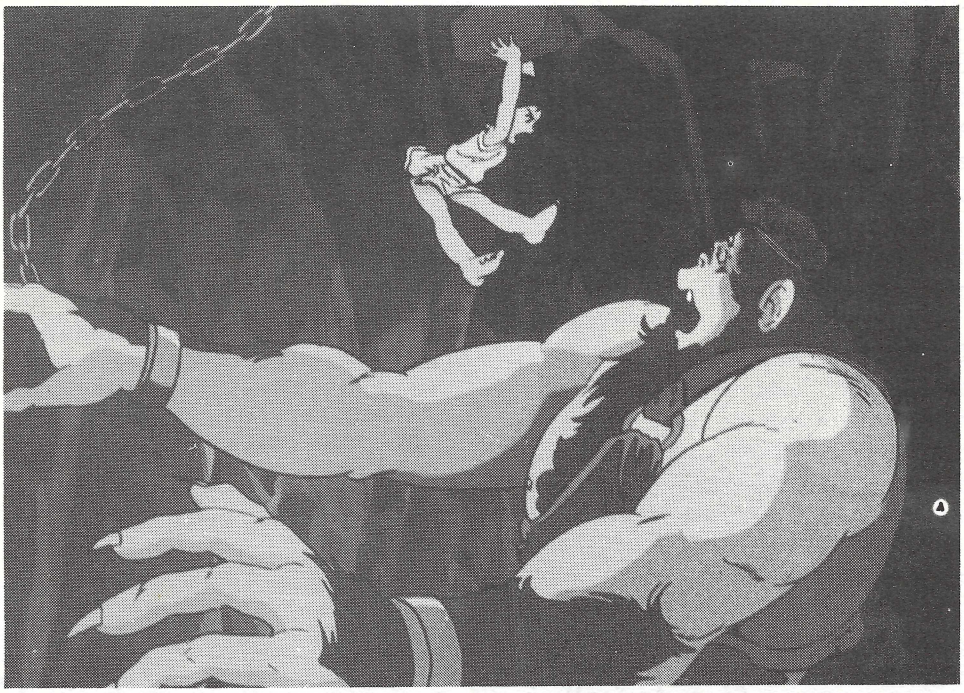


ARION

NEO-HEROIC FANTASY

THE STORY OF ARION



Arion began as a comic strip running in the magazine SF & FANTASY "RYU," and represented creator Yoshikazu Yasuhiko's long awaited return to comics. He had spent the last few years working on the highly acclaimed GUNDAM animation series, first as a character designer, then as an animation director, and finally as a full director (the third GUNDAM movie was almost entirely directed by Yasuhiko). However, he continued to regard himself primarily as a comics artist (and illustrator—his work for the original CRUSHER JOE and DIRTY PAIR books is well known), and finally returned to the field he loved best.

Yasuhiko took great liberties with the original myths and characters (for example, Arion was originally a horse) but the end result is entertaining and perhaps slightly more culturally acceptable to the Japanese.

His draftsmanship on the comics is gorgeous, and is not (unlike many other Japanese comics) heavily assisted. He uses a brush for everything except panel borders because (he claims) "I cannot use a pen!" The page layouts betray his years as a storyboard artist, with many sequences requiring little more than a bit of in-betweening to transfer to film (indeed, many show up essentially unchanged in the animation).

He prefers to work in what he calls a "Tezuka style—soft, rounded characters." After he finished the ARION comics, he took a trip through Turkey and Greece, and the strong influences he picked up on that journey show in the movie version of ARION, and of course in one of his recent comics, KURUDO NO HOSHI ("Star of the Kurds"), which takes place in Turkey.

After CRUSHER JOE, Yasuhiko was reluctant to continue with animation, still feeling very strongly that his place was as a comics artist, but he was pressured into doing KYOSHIN GORG ("Giant Gorg") for Nippon Sunrise—an excellent series that is everything that Jonny Quest should have been. After extensive negotiation, he finally agreed to follow it up by directing an adaptation of ARION, which still had a huge fan following even years after the final volume was released.

The first scripts were submitted in January of 1985, and by May 15th the storyboards had been approved and production began. Almost thirty minutes had to be cut from the original proposal, and still the movie would run two full hours—a testament to the difficulty of adapting the complex 1075 page novel.

The release date was set for March, 1986, and it premiered on time to mixed reviews. Many critics felt it contained too much story and too many characters for the audience to truly enjoy the film. "You spend the entire film five minutes behind," groused one reviewer. "The script has 2,600 lines of dialogue, and that is just too much for a viewer to absorb in only two hours." However, such notables as Osamu Tezuka came out in support of the movie, Tezuka himself saying he felt it was quite simple and straightforward.

Yasuhiko seemed quite pleased with the end result, and singled out several of the staff as having done particularly good jobs. Two real standouts are Shuichi Hirato, who did the stunning backgrounds, and Nobuko Mizuta, who was the color coordinator. Both really do deserve acclaim, as does Jo Hisaishi (NAUSICAA, LAPUTA), who supplied a typically high-quality soundtrack. Another notable contribution was by the famous ladies' comics artist, Ryoko Yamagishi (HIIZUNOTOKORO NO TENSHI) who did the exceptional costume designs. Mayumi Tanaka later won an Anime Grand Prix best actress award for her portrayal of Seneca.

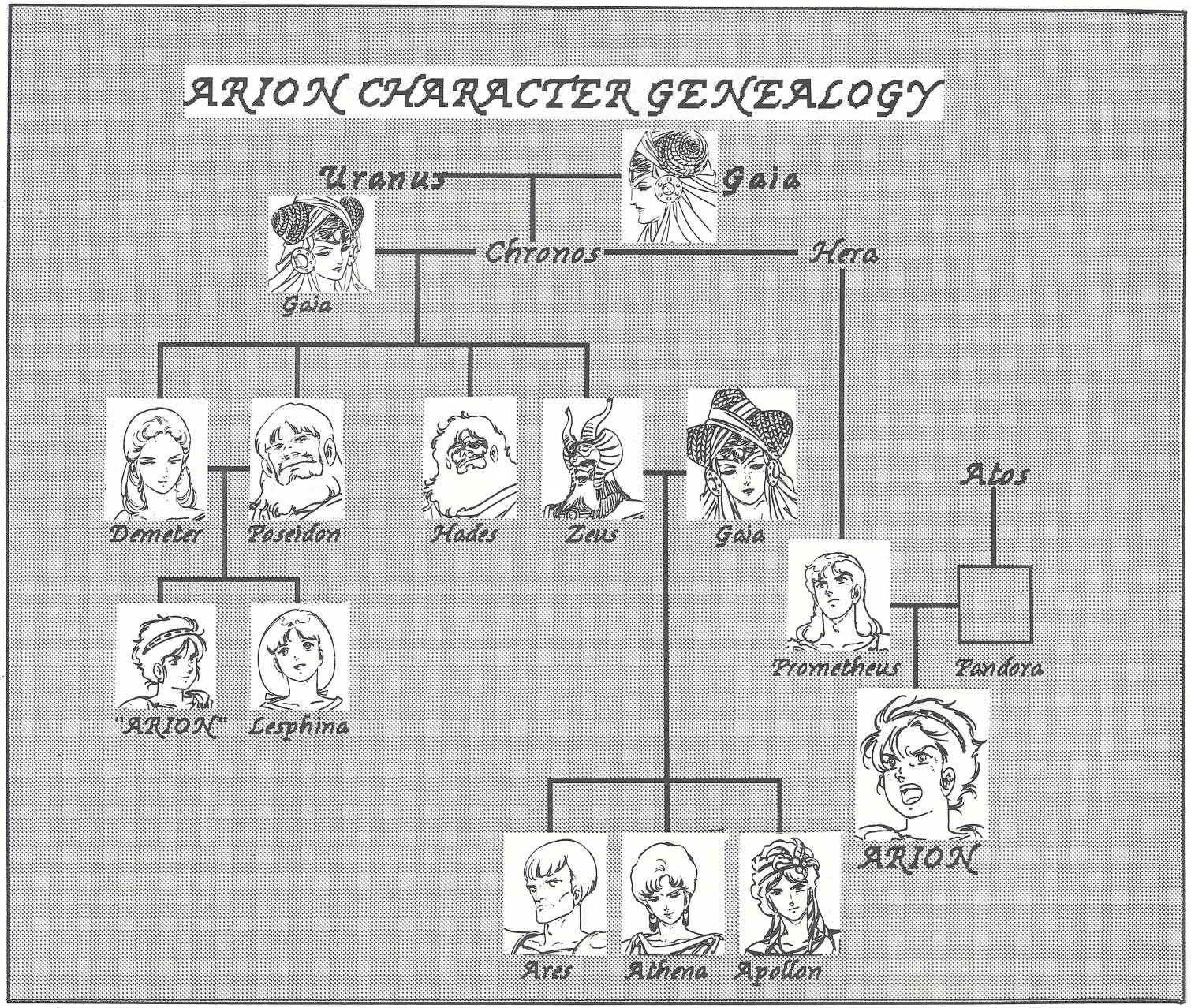
One of Tezuka's comments on the film is particularly interesting: "I feel it is easier for a Japanese person to create a story about a Japanese myth as opposed to a Greek myth. ARION is really a Japanese myth which borrows the setting and, to an extent, the structure of a

Greek myth. Arion seems to symbolize Yamato Takeru or perhaps Susano Onomikoto (Japanese mythological characters)." Yasuhiko agrees. "Arion was partly modelled after Susano." Tezuka felt that ARION followed the tradition of the old Shonen (boys) Manga—one central character that the rest of the plot turns around.

During the creation of the film, a number of major changes were made to the comics story, as Yasuhiko relates: "The characters of Seneca and Arion both grew considerably. Personally, I became rather fond of Athena, who is really quite a melancholy and tragic figure. Ares and Gaia changed almost totally, and much of the story of Prometheus had to be dropped. Still, his appearances in the movie are pivotal and very powerful, so it was true to the original to that extent."

The ending is deliberately ambiguous. "I wanted to incorporate a variety of elements into the last scene—one is a happy ending, wherein Arion and Lesphina are both returned to Earth and live happily thereafter; and another perception that they both die and then ascend into heaven on Pegasus—you can interpret it either way."

Although, in the final analysis, the critics are right—there really is too much story for two hours—ARION is still a hugely enjoyable movie, and certainly represents an extremely high level of craftsmanship. It deserves, at the least, a place in the top ten animated features. Yasuhiko continues to swear he won't return to animation again, but let's hope it isn't true. In fact, rumor has it he is working on a new film now . . .



ARION

"This is the era before gods and men were divided. . . ."

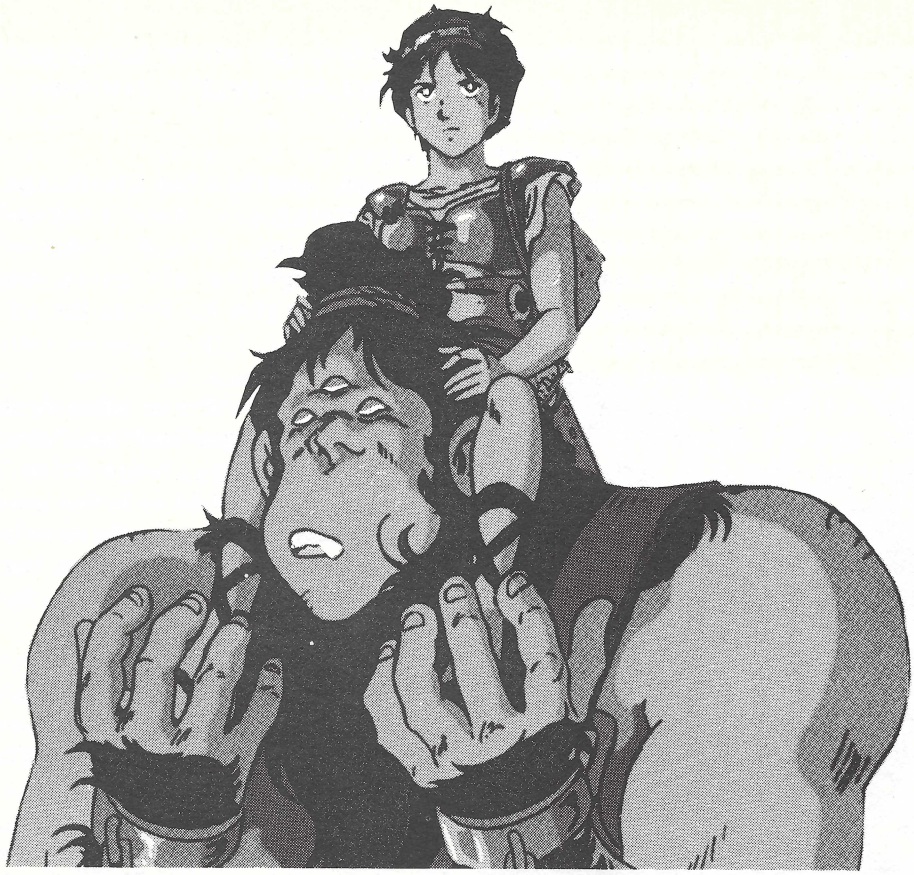
In Thrace: Hades, god of the underworld, has journeyed to this distant land to talk with Demeter, goddess of the harvest. He tells her that Poseidon (god of the seas) has amassed a tremendous navy and is preparing to attack and unseat Zeus (god of the land, and ruler of Olympus). Demeter says she no longer cares about the petty quarrels of the gods, and just wishes to be left alone to take care of her son, Arion.

Hades heads back to the underworld and Arion tags along, intending to keep him company for a short distance. He tells Hades that he has been searching for an herb that will restore his mother's sight. "Such an herb exists in Macedonia," claims Hades. "Come with me. . ."

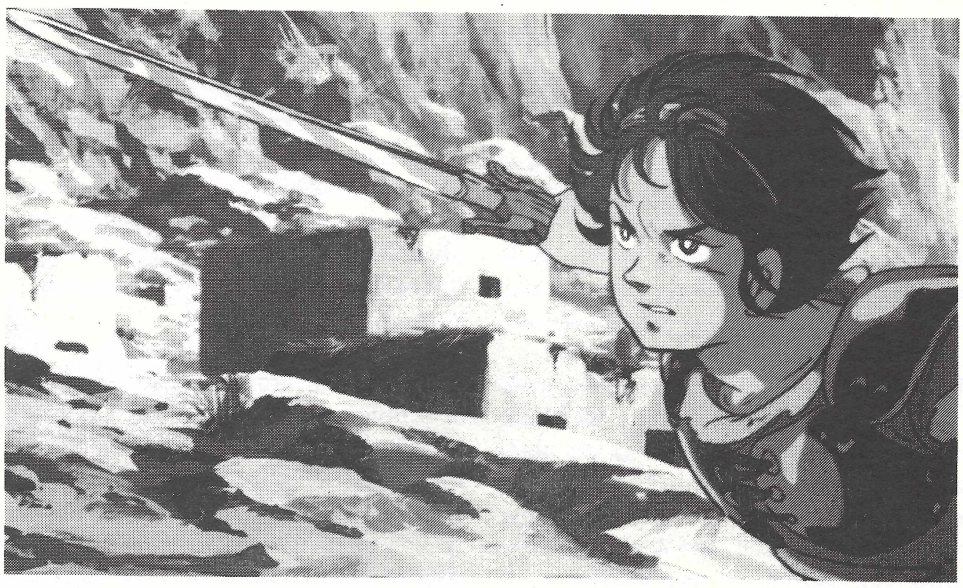
Suddenly aware that Arion is being kidnapped, Demeter prays to Zeus for aid, but to no avail.

Captive in the kingdom of the underworld, Arion meets the giant Geedo and displays the spirit that Hades had hoped for. He tells Arion that his mother was cursed by Zeus, who lives in Olympus. If Arion kills Zeus, the curse will be broken and Demeter will be able to see again. Armed with Hades' sword and the knowledge that he is Poseidon's son, Arion begins the training that will release his considerable potential as a warrior.

Caption: *"In the past, Chronos Titan ruled the entire world, but when he died, it was divided between Zeus (land), Poseidon (sea), and Hades (underworld). Hades seemed content with his lot, but Zeus and Poseidon had immediately begun to fight for total control. Zeus had little martial skill, so his daughter Athena was given command of the troops. Although Zeus has tried to negotiate with Poseidon, the world continues to be divided by war. . . ."*



Finally ready to confront Zeus, Arion, accompanied by Geedo, sets out on his journey to Olympus. He encounters the young thief Seneca, who realizes that Arion is a demigod. A patrol from the forces of Zeus arrives. It is under the direction of Ares, the god of war. Despite his powers, Arion is taken prisoner, while Seneca and Geedo are lost. Ares hands Arion over to Athena, who has him questioned as to the origin of his sword—which she is quite certain belongs to Hades. Ares believes that Arion is a spy for Hades, and suspects that the subtle and malicious god of the underworld is using Arion as a tool in some malignant plot.



Lesphina, Athena's mute serving girl, feels sorry for Arion and ministers to him. She is taunted by Apollon (eldest son of Zeus) who asks her to sing for him. Ares intercedes and betrays his annoyance with Apollon. "You are useless!" he snarls. The battlefield is no place for a playboy! Were you not my brother, I would have slain you long ago!" As he leaves, Apollon casually informs Lesphina that Arion is scheduled to be executed in a day or so.

That night, she helps Arion escape, and Seneca puts in another appearance, leading Arion to Hades's sword. But while escaping from the camp, Arion and Seneca are taken prisoner by Poseidon's navy, which is massing for an attack on Zeus's army.

Athena prepares for the attack, assuring her generals that Poseidon's mariners will be easily defeated on land.

Arion finally confronts his father, Poseidon, and wants to know why he abandoned his wife and child, and why he is fighting Zeus. "Gods do not need a 'why,' " he says. "I see no reason why Zeus, and not I, should be leader of the gods. Athena acts as his proxy on the battlefield, but she is no match for me." He also tells Arion that Lesphina is his sister: Demeter has twins, but the baby girl was captured by Zeus's army and given to Athena as a slave.

Hades feels the storm rising, and journeys to view the battle as a spectator.

Poseidon launches his attack and slices through the massed ranks of Athena's army. The presence of Poseidon fighting alongside his men helps to give his forces the advantage.

Arion confronts Athena after first killing her younger brother, Ares. "If I had known you were Arion," she says, "I would have killed you immediately!" But only the timely intervention of Apollon saves her from Arion's wrath.

Apollon finds Arion's hatred of the Titan family amusing: "After all," he points out, "as the son of Demeter and Poseidon, you, too, are a Titan."

During his futile pursuit of Apollon, Arion encounters Hades and accuses him of orchestrating the confrontation between Zeus and Poseidon: "You just want them to kill each other so that you can rule unchallenged!"

Lost in fury at the way he has been used by Hades, Arion kills the dark god, ignoring the curse Hades places on him as his last act: "You will have to walk alone through a dark and unfriendly world. . . ."

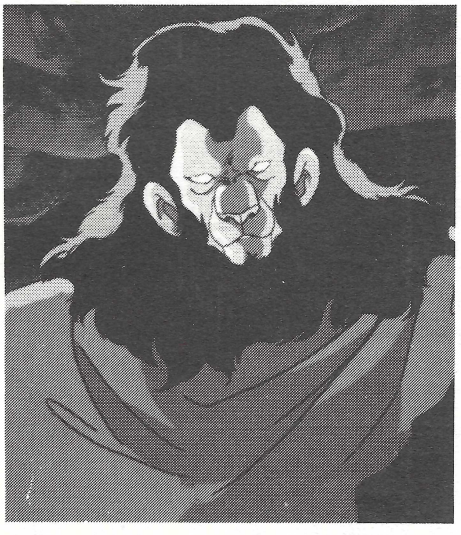
Athena broods over her rescue by Apollon, and angrily accuses him of abdicating his responsibility to Zeus. "This army should be under your command . . . you are the eldest. I loathe this job!" she complains. Apollon waves her grumbling aside and asks for a favor: "Give me your servant Lesphina." But Athena will not.

Arion is sick, and while in the grip of a fever-dream caused by Hades's curse, he kills Poseidon and is forced to flee the camp. He is cornered by Poseidon's men, who accuse him of being a traitor in the pay of Olympus. But fate lends a hand in the shape of a missing friend, Geedo, and Arion escapes.

In Olympus, Zeus calls on the Erinyes (Furies), the gods of revenge. "Arion has killed his father," he accuses. "He must pay for his actions!" The Erinyes agree, and disappear between dimensions to seek the unfortunate lad.

Caption: *"Without the presence of Poseidon, his army was overwhelmed by the forces of Athena, and his navy dispersed upon the waters and was no longer a threat to Zeus."*

Arion slumps into a depression over killing his father, but is visited by the "Black Lion King." At first, he believes it to be another of the visions conjured by Hades's curse. The King berates him for his loss of spirit: "If you really want to die, here! I hold out my sword . . . impale yourself on it!" Seeing that Arion still has a will to live, the Black Lion King instructs him to seek out Ryukaon, the exiled King of Arcadia. "Ryukaon will be of great assistance to you," Arion is assured, and the Black Lion King vanishes.



Athena tries to seduce Apollon, as she wants to see the Titan family line continue. But Apollon refuses, saying that he would rather choose Lesphina. She, too, is a pure-blooded Titan, but only his cousin, not his sister. Consumed with rage, the spurned Athena takes out

her anger on the innocent Lesphina, who is saved by Apollon. Defeated and humiliated, Athena swears "If I ever see either of you again, I will kill you!"

Arion finally meets Ryukaon (and his monstrous pet, Tyupaan). Accompanied by Heracles, Ryukaon had retired from the court power struggles in Arcadia, and had lived here as a hermit for many years. The Erinyes have tracked Arion to this distant mountain, and demand his life in return for his crimes. Ryukaon saves Arion from the Erinyes, and takes him between time and space to show him some important events.

The all-father, Uranus, was killed by his son Chronos, who was in turn poisoned by his son, Zeus. The weak-willed Zeus had in fact been goaded into this act by his mother, Gaia. She then took Zeus as her husband, producing Athena, Apollon, and Ares. Zeus lived in fear of reprisal by his brothers, Hades and Poseidon, and so prayed to even higher gods than the Titans. Angered by the treachery and squabbling of the Titan family, the greater gods have gradually diminished the power of the Olympian gods. Poseidon rapes Demeter (producing Arion and Lesphina), and so incurs the wrath of Prometheus (son of Chronos and his first wife, Hera). Zeus fears Prometheus, and has him put to death, ostensibly for giving mortals the knowledge of fire. Next, Ryukaon transports Arion to Olympus where he sees Lesphina held prisoner. "You even smell like mother. . . " he says softly.

Back at Mount Atos, Ryukaon tells Arion that the Erinyes are actually Arcadians, but have aligned themselves with Zeus in order to have more power. "All the gods are powerful, yourself included, but Apollon is something special," Ryukaon warns. "He is your true enemy in Olympus. . . " "I can't match his power," mutters Arion. "How can I fight him?" "I have already shown you," says Ryukaon. "Lesphina . . . ?" says the startled Arion. . . Unaware of the gathering storm, Zeus gloats over the deaths of his brothers Hades and Poseidon: "Now I can rule unopposed!"

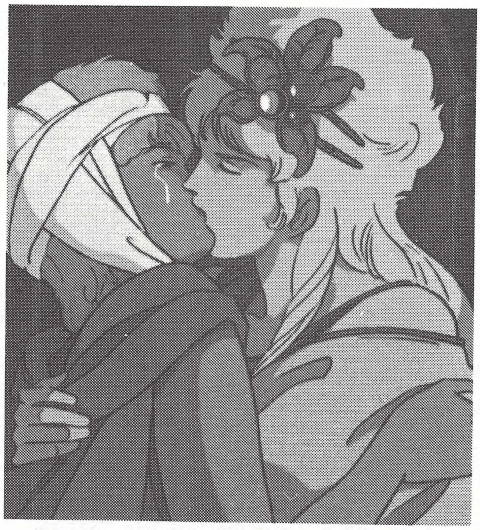
After seeing Apollon and Lesphina in Olympus, Athena makes another attempt to kill the unfortunate girl. But she has forgotten that even though Lesphina has been a mere servant for many years, she is, nonetheless, a pure-blooded Titan and a goddess in her own right. . .

In a village near Mt. Atos, Arion learns of the god Prometheus, loved by mortals because he alone of all the Olympians took an interest in mankind, even marrying a mortal woman—Pandora. The mortals have long contemplated revenge against Zeus for killing their beloved Prometheus, and now, with the fortuitous arrival of Arion, they are ready to move against Olympus.

Arion agrees to help: "Because of the ceaseless plotting of the Titans, I have killed my father and been stolen from my mother. I am going to Olympus to take my revenge on Zeus, and to rescue Lesphina. If you want to follow me, please do, but this must be your own choice."

The mortal army, led by Arion, battles its way towards Olympus, gaining support along the way. Zeus runs whining to Gaia, begging for help in defeating Arion.

Athena makes one last attempt to kill Lesphina, but Apollon has had enough and kills his sister.



At last, the army reaches the gates of Olympus, and prepares to use the weapon created by them long ago by Prometheus. However, Arion doubts it will be enough to ensure their success. . . .

Seneca reveals an unexpected attraction to Arion—"I envy Lesphina so much!" Poor Arion is confused.

The mortal army attacks at dawn, but they only fire their weapon twice before it is destroyed and their forces scattered by the superior weaponry of Olympus. Ryukaon sends Typaan to provide Arion with a route into Olympus. After making their way through a spectre-haunted valley, they land in the castle proper, and while Heracles holds off the main force, Arion heads for the heart of Olympus and Zeus.

The terrified Zeus again sets the Erinyes on Arion, but the Black Lion King intercedes, saying, "He did not kill his father, for his true mother was Pandora, and I, Prometheus, am his true father!" He then tells Arion that Pandora was

killed by Zeus's army when she was almost at term, so he was delivered by caesarean section. Demeter's twins were born at the same time, and both were captured by Zeus's army. "Arion" was killed, and Lesphina was given to Athena. Prometheus gave his son to Demeter, claiming that he was her son Arion, rescued from the army. "Lies!" screams Zeus. "Kill them both," he orders the Erinyes. . . . But it is no use: Prometheus is too powerful.

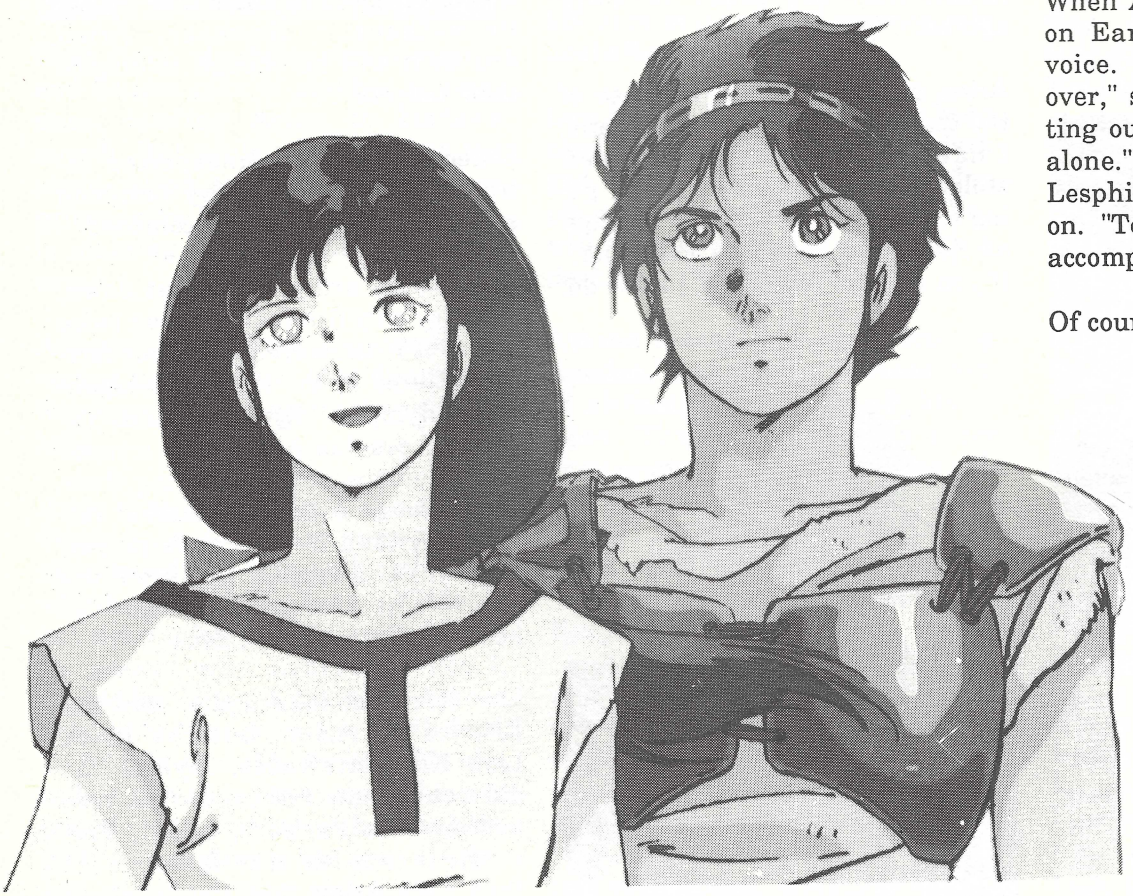
Prometheus faces Gaia, and accuses her of bringing ruin on the Titan family through her unswerving pursuit of power. Enraged, Gaia kills him, but his spirit releases the latent power within Lesphina and she ends Gaia's reign once and for all.

Apollon casually kills Zeus, saying calmly "Chronos killed his father, Uranus, and Zeus killed his father, Chronos . . . I'm just living up to the family name."

Apollon demands that Arion give him Lesphina, so that he can continue the pure line of Titans. She is the only eligible female of the blood left. "The Titans must not die out." explains Apollon. "Mortals require gods, not just for knowledge and wisdom, but also for spiritual needs. They need to have a superior being to look up to . . ." He tries to take Lesphina by force, but she is powerful enough to repulse him and he accepts defeat gracefully.

When Arion and Lesphina awaken on Earth, she has recovered her voice. "The age of the Titans is over," says Arion, "and we are setting out into a future that is ours alone." "Where shall we go?" asks Lesphina. "To Thrace," says Arion. "To visit your mother. Will you accompany me, now and forever?"

Of course she will. . . .



Arion

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Akiko Tanaka
Yoshikazu Yasuhiko
Music
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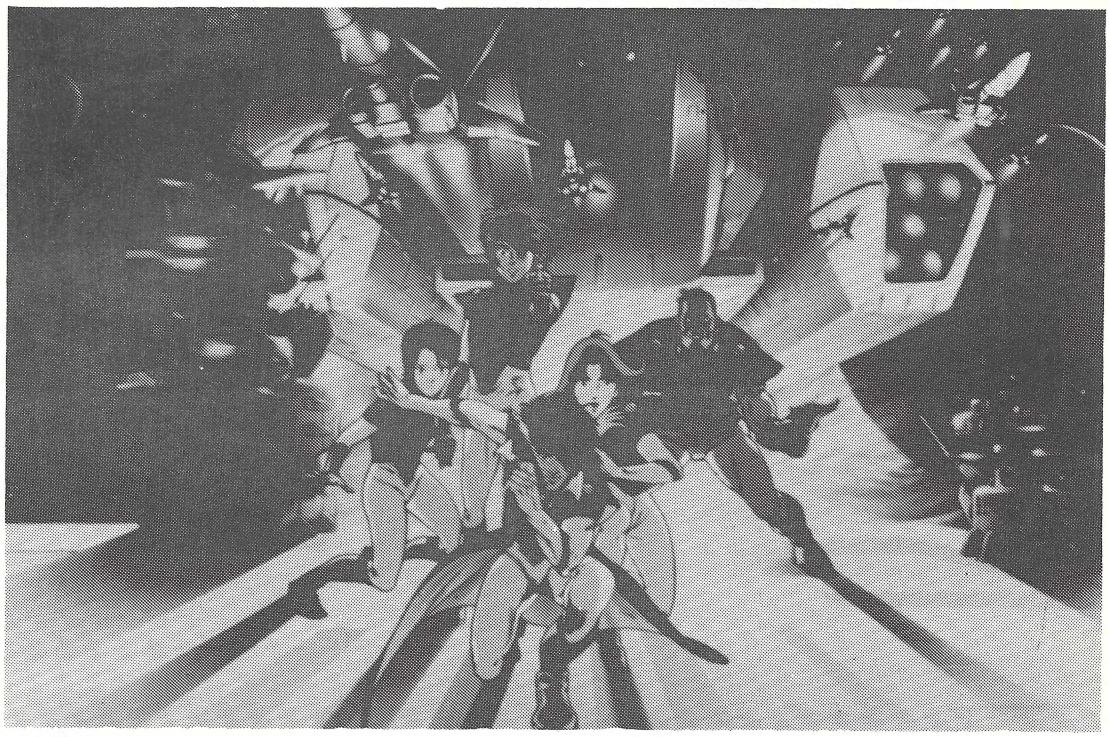

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DEVIL MAN

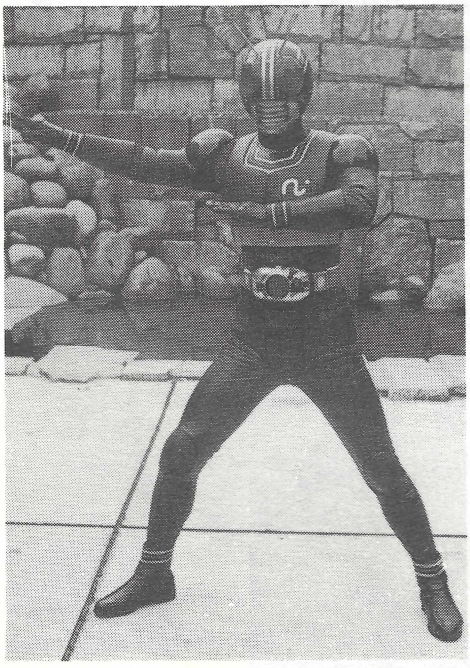
DEVIL MAN was masterminded by legendary horror/sci-fi illustrator Go Nagai, the creator of Mazinger Z and Great Mazinger.

DEVIL MAN, being horror-oriented, was much ahead of its time, showing in 1972 during the giant robot craze. Now Devil Man returns in an Original Animation Video released jointly by Kodonsha and King Records. Being an OAV, it will allow its director, Tsutomu Iida (he was Assistant Director on Laputa, but this is his first solo project), more of a free hand, which is necessary for the horror genre.

According to the story, demon *zoku* (tribes) ruled the world before the advent of man. Since then, their power has waned. Now in the present day, Ryo Asuka, the son of the late Professor Asuka who was an expert on demons and the occult, discovers from his father's studies that the demons are about to attempt to regain control of Earth. Realizing the imminent danger, he tells his best friend, Akira Fudo, of this plan. They then decide to try and stop the demons. They know that the only way to fight a demon is to possess the power of one, so they enter a special ritual room left by Ryo's father and summon the demon Amon. Akira then unites with Amon and becomes Devil Man. The story is based directly on Go Nagai's original comic story, and the 51-minute OAV should be released by November 1.

KAMEN RIDER BLACK

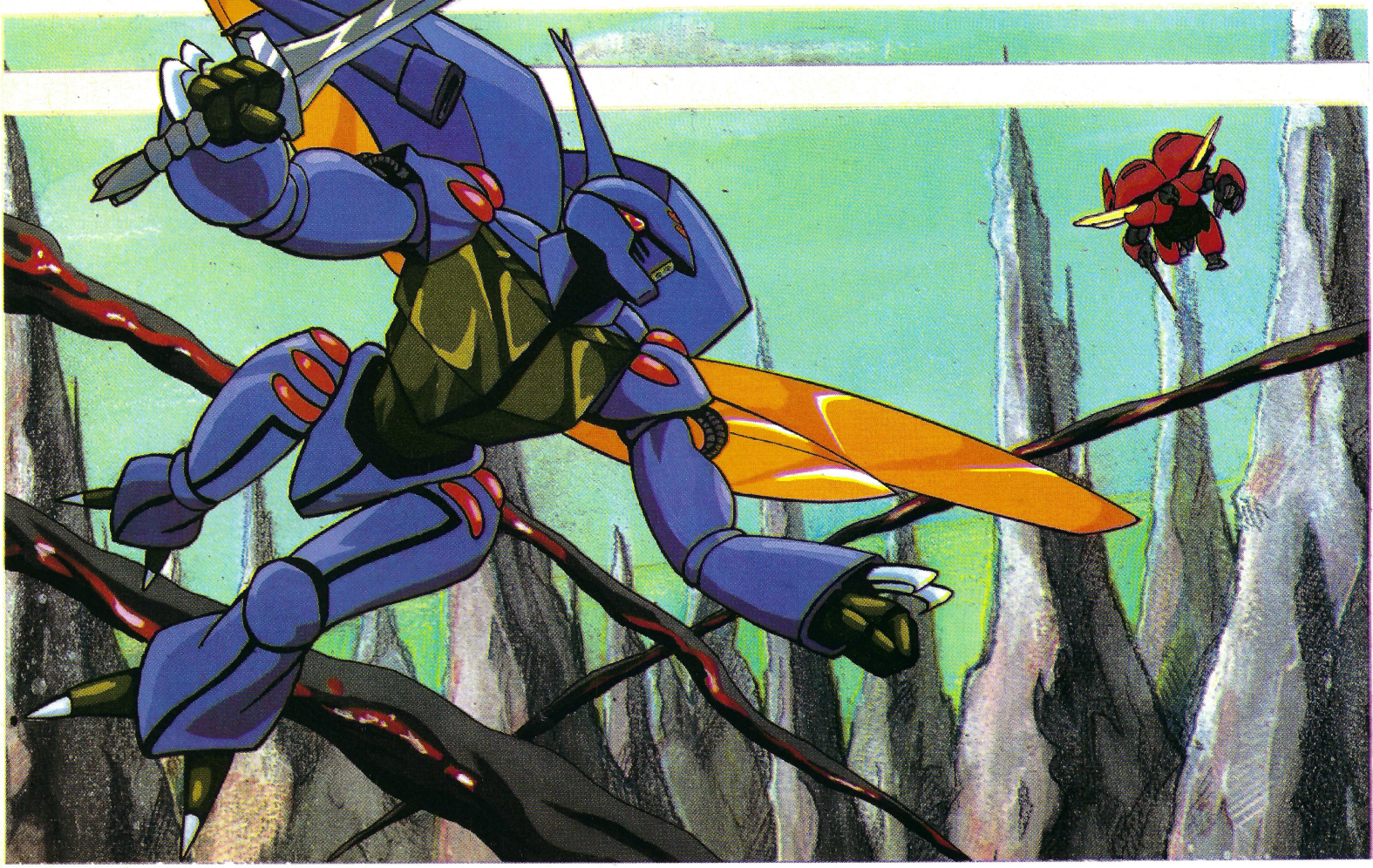
Created by comic artist Shotaro Ishimori (CYBORG 009 and KIKAIDA) and second only to ULTRAMAN in popularity as a live-action superhero series, the various KAMEN RIDER shows ran several seasons through the late seventies, and still retain a large "cult" following in Japan. The newest addition to this live-action legacy is KAMEN RIDER BLACK. Originally just the working title, the name stuck and is now final. Over 4,500 people tried out to be the new faces in front of the camera, but Toei Studios has kept many of the original production crew behind the scenes for this project. The new Rider is much more streamlined and modern in comparison to his "older brothers," possibly showing some influence from Toei's very popular "Space Sheriff" series such as Gavan and Juspion.



The story deals with an evil society named Golgom, which chooses two young men to be its new strong arm. During the operation which will endow them with the same cybernetic powers as a Kamen Rider, they fail to fully purge one man of his human soul. In turn, he retains his deep inbred animosity for evil and escapes the society, becoming Kamen Rider Black. One switch for the new show is that Kamen Rider goes through more of a metamorphosis than a direct "one-two" change. This plays a big part in the story as Kamen Rider Black must face his evil counterpart, Shadow Moon, who due to his lack of a human soul is unable to complete the full change. The tentative release date for the series is Oct. 4.

AURA BATTLER DUNBINE

On February 5, 1983, Aura Battler Dunbine made its debut. Created by the respected animator Yoshiyuki Tomino, who also created such memorable shows as Gundam, Ideon, and Xabungle, Aura Battler Dunbine chronicled the adventures of motocross racer Sho Zama and his comrades as they fought the forces of Lord Drake Luft for control of the mythical world of Byston Well. As typical as the plotline sounds, Dunbine was not the usual robot animation show. There is no conquering alien race seeking the demise of the robot, no alien prince, no son of the robot's creator. Instaad, we see Sho Zama go from a young man with little ambition and an unhappy home life to the driving force which stands between life and death for Earth and Byston Well. Even the Dunbine robot, which was added later to Mr. Tomino's original story to satisfy the toy companies, is unique to the genre of robot shows. Though the toy line wasn't successful, it was one of the best integrations of a toy into a show. This first installment covers the first 27 episodes of the 49 episode series.

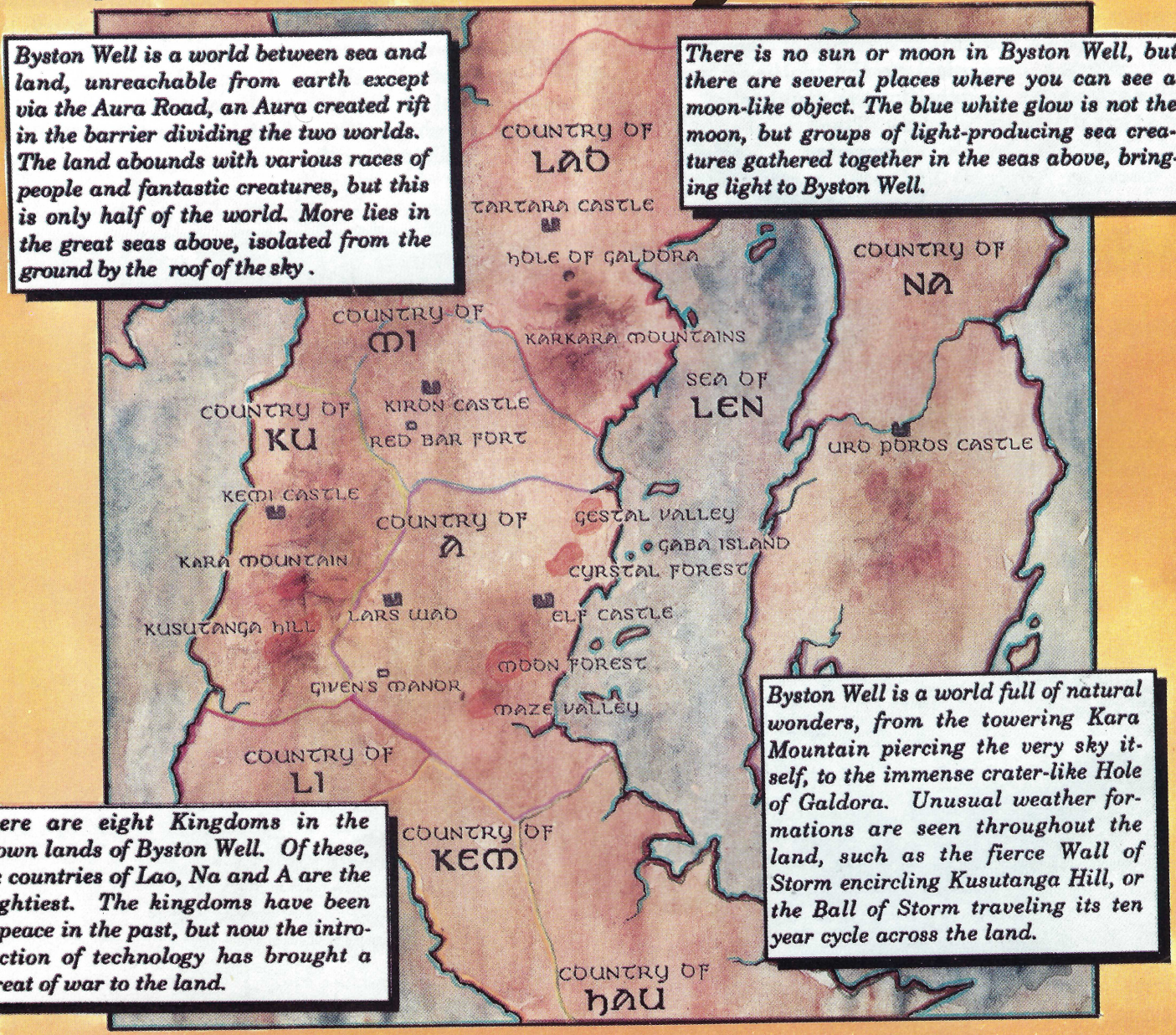


Blessed are those who remember the tale of Byston Well, it is because their hearts are pure. Although we were born on this Earth with the tale, we are destined not to remember it. But with the tale told by the Mi-Fellaid, we shall remember again.

From time immemorial, Byston Well had been a land of serenity, the next world where people rested their souls in peace and enjoyed the other life.

However, when technology was brought to Byston Well it turned the people greedy, and they began to produce machines of war. The world tried to eliminate them, the people who used the machines became alien to Byston Well...

The World of Byston Well

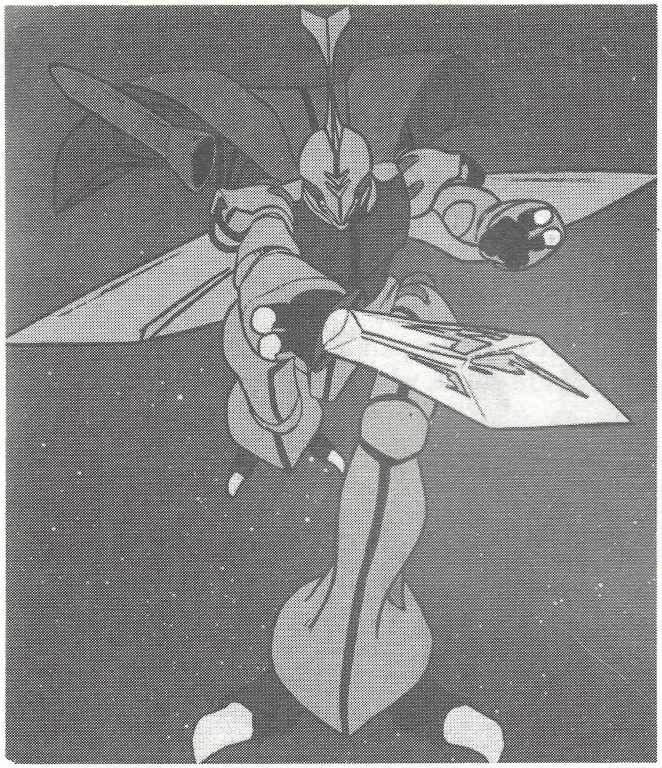


Byston Well is a world between sea and land, unreachable from earth except via the Aura Road, an Aura created rift in the barrier dividing the two worlds. The land abounds with various races of people and fantastic creatures, but this is only half of the world. More lies in the great seas above, isolated from the ground by the roof of the sky.

There is no sun or moon in Byston Well, but there are several places where you can see a moon-like object. The blue white glow is not the moon, but groups of light-producing sea creatures gathered together in the seas above, bringing light to Byston Well.

There are eight Kingdoms in the known lands of Byston Well. Of these, the countries of Lao, Na and A are the mightiest. The kingdoms have been at peace in the past, but now the introduction of technology has brought a threat of war to the land.

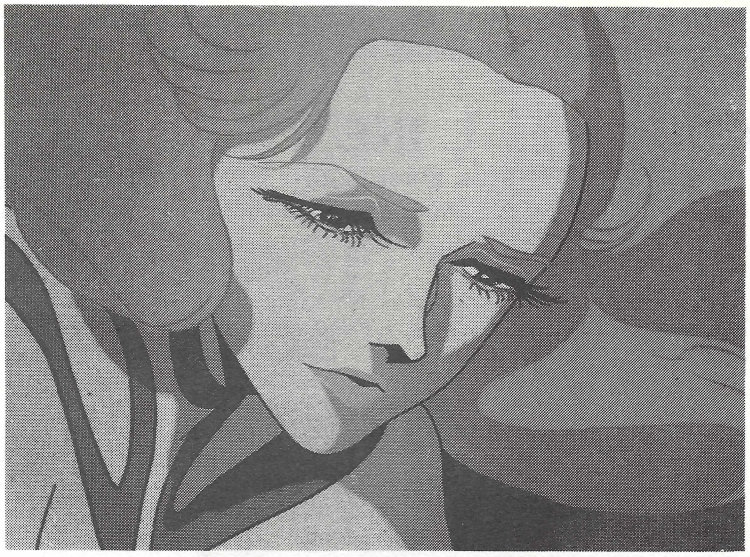
Byston Well is a world full of natural wonders, from the towering Kara Mountain piercing the very sky itself, to the immense crater-like Hole of Galdora. Unusual weather formations are seen throughout the land, such as the fierce Wall of Storm encircling Kusutanga Hill, or the Ball of Storm traveling its ten year cycle across the land.



Aura Power is an energy emanating from all living creatures. It is directly related to a creature's life force and will to survive. The basic form of Aura Power is the Aura Barrier, a protective field surrounding the individual and varying in strength with the individual. All people are born with the same potential Aura Power. but some show greater ability to draw upon this power. To use this potential an individual must attune himself to only the necessary, discarding all else, and thus reduce existing problems to their simplest form. Situations such as life and death conflict produce an increase in Aura output, as thoughts are focused solely on survival. It is possible to increase Aura output through practice, though one's maximum output is limited by natural safeguards. Man-made mechanical Aura increasers collect energy from the surrounding area and the pilot, and feed it to the converter, allowing less skilled people to quickly increase their Aura output. However, this has drawbacks as it allows some more skillful individuals to exceed their natural safeguards and reach an Aura output state known as "Hyper." In "Hyper" an individual's Aura output exceeds all natural barriers to the point of self destruction.

Aura Machines are bio-mechanical machines actively controlled and run by Aura Power. The larger or more complex the vehicle, the greater Aura output necessary to operate it. An insufficient Aura usually results in a below average performance or complete inoperation of the vehicle.

A-Fellario are a race of water dwelling faeries living in the Land of Water above Byston Well. Possessing great Aura powers, the A-Fellario are the only ones capable of opening the Aura Road and bringing Earth people to Byston Well. They possess knowledge of the true nature of Byston Well, and will not willingly interfere in the affairs of the Commons.



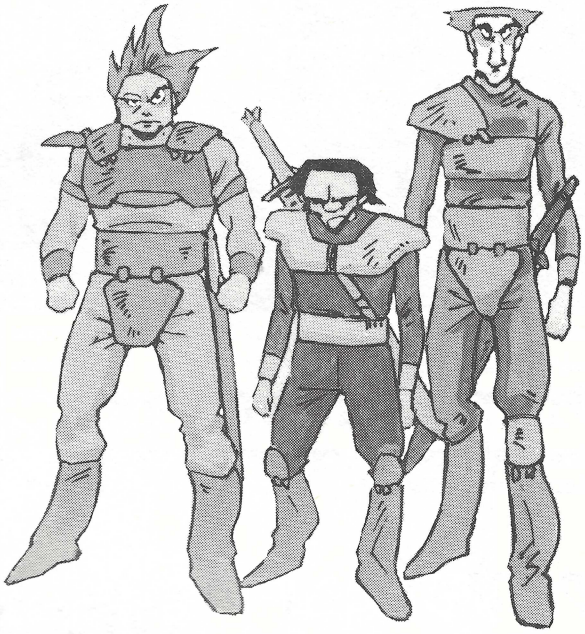
Mi-Fellario are small winged faeries who live behind the Wall of Storm at Kusutanga Hill. Watched over by the A-Fellario, they lead a simple life, caring for the newborn Mi-Fellario brought from the flowers. Some Mi-Fellario flee their home and go out to live among the Commons. These Mi-Fellario, possessing excellent memories, keen sight, and some minor Aura Powers, are valuable servants to the Commons.

Surface People

are humans from Earth. They possess a strong Aura output and are thus excellent choices for operating Aura machines, especially the powerful Aura Battler robots. The strong Aura Power of Earth people translates into an all around basic power increase for the machines. There are few earth people in Byston Well since only the Mi-Fellario can bring them through the Aura Road, which they seldom do.

Commons

are the humans native to Byston Well. They are identical to Earth humans in all aspects except that they tend to be less adept at using their Aura Power. Most Commons possess enough Aura output to operate some of the lesser Aura powered machines, such as the Gli Wings, but the majority are not capable of piloting the Aura Fighters or the large Aura Battlers. There are a few rare individuals who possess the high Aura output necessary to handle the larger machines, but even they have trouble fighting Earth-born pilots. Many Commons of Byston Wells must practice or use Aura increasers in order to sufficiently operate Aura machinery.

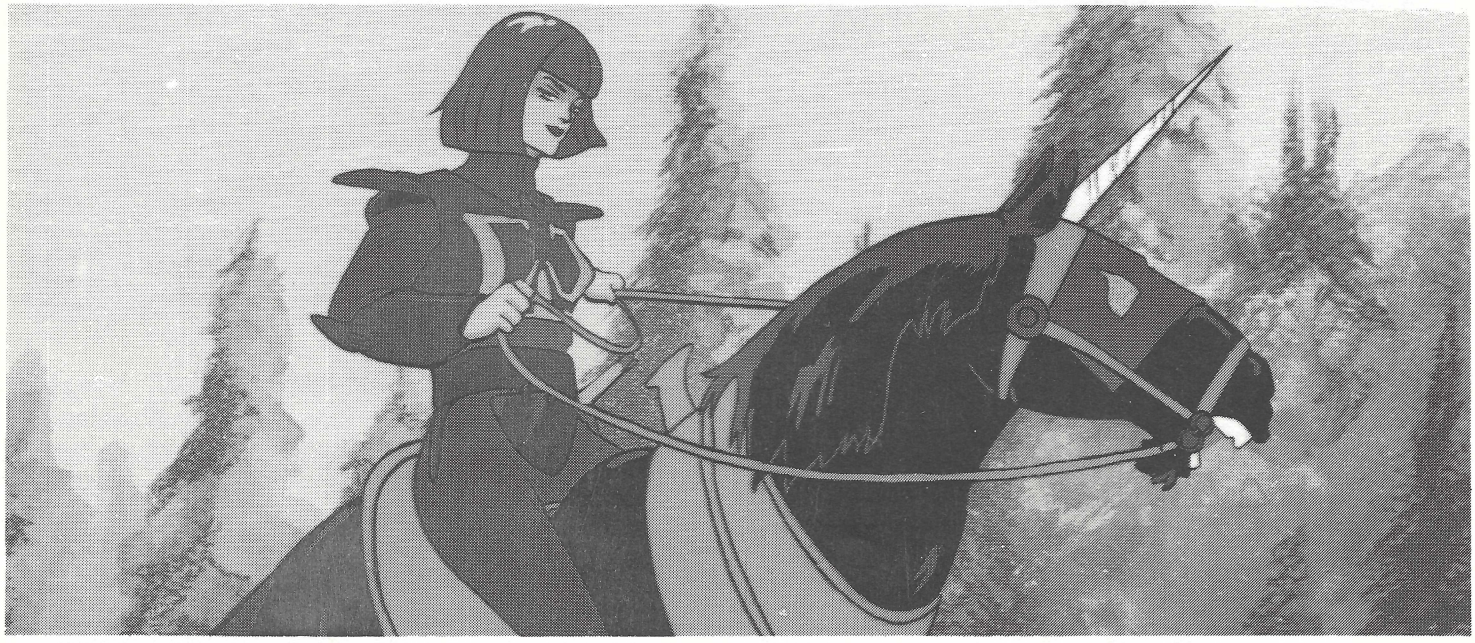


Galo Ran

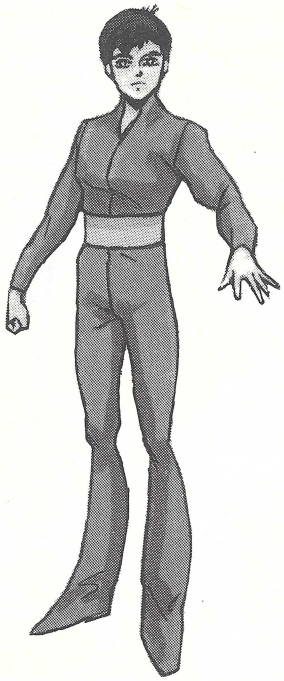
are a race of people native to Byston Well who are capable of running with great speed. They are considered by the Commons to be inferior and to have little value except as spies or messengers. Some tribes of Galo Ran specialize in banditry and various other illegal activities. They are responsible for several kidnappings during the show.

Animal Life

There are a wide variety of animals and other strange creatures in Byston Wells, such as unicorns, giant leeches called "Boneless," and a variety of weird plant life. The majority of these creatures have limited intelligence and play only a minor role in the Byston Well story .

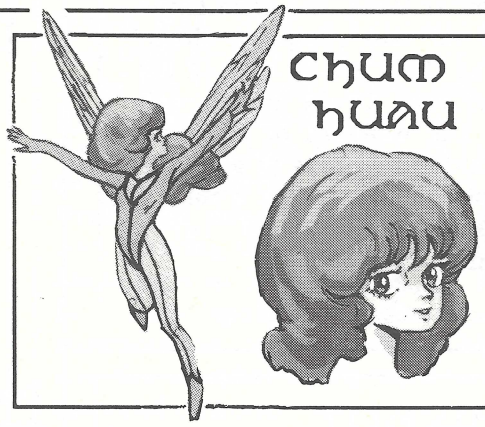


Shō Zama



A young Japanese motocross racer, age 18, Sho has been transported to Byston Well to serve as a warrior under Drake Luft. Sho, being from Earth, possesses an especially powerful Aura, which is necessary to effectively operate an Aura Battler. Learning of Drake's evil plans, Sho is persuaded to join Nie Given's forces against Drake. Sho is considered a rebel to his parents, but finds acceptance in Byston Well. He shows concern towards the natives and eventually becomes romantically involved with Marvel Frozen.

Chum Huau

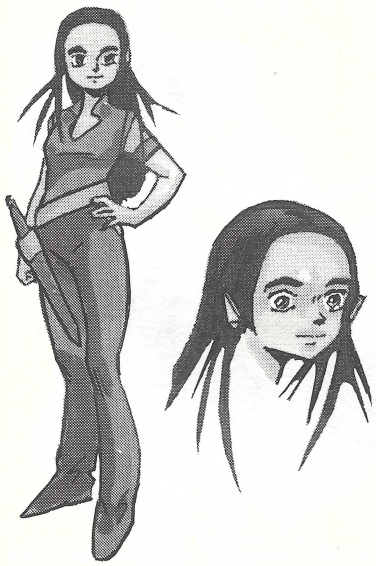


A small Mi-Fellario who aids Nie Given. Chum delivers love messages between Nie Given and Riml Luft and occasionally does other tasks such as tracking and spying. Though at first she scorns Sho for helping Drake, she later developes a crush on him. Being a cute and easily recognizable figure, she was made the mascot for the show.

Marvel Frozen

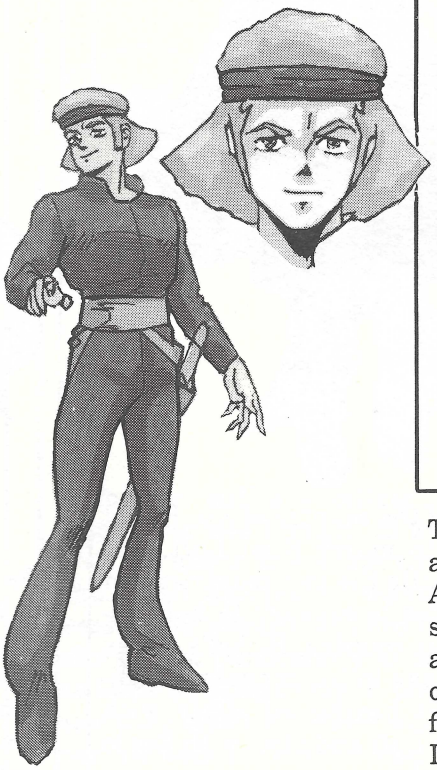
Marvel was brought to Byston Well from Earth by Nauku Rabe. She is 18 years old, from Dallas, Texas, and is in sense a cowgirl. Brave but independent, she is a strong supporter of Nie Given and his cause. Upon first meeting Sho she is rather attracted, and they become fast friends and later lovers.

Keen Kiss



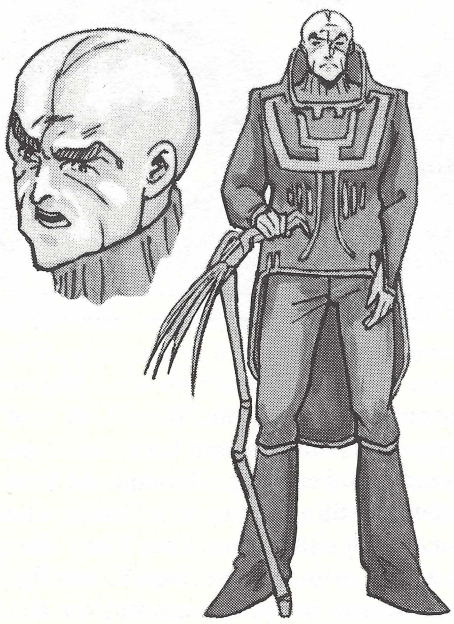
The daughter of a noble who sided with Drake. Keen disagreeing with her father's actions, sides with Nie Given to fight Drake, and her father.

Nie Given



The son of Romun Given, Nie starts out as a spoiled child, irresponsible and reckless. After his parents' death, Nie learns to assume the responsibility of his family name and becomes the driving force behind the opposition to Drake's takeover. Nie now fights to avenge his parents' murder by Drake, and to free his love, Riml Luft.

DRAKE LUFT



Drake a lesser lord under King Fraun Elf in the country of A, is the center of evil forces in Byston Well. By bringing Earth technology to Byston Well, Drake plans to kill King Fraun and eventually take over A and the surrounding countries. Resourceful Drake sells his newfound technolgy to other lords, and then turns around and conquers them, using their money to fund his conquests. Drake fails to realize the dangers of bringing outside influences to a fragile Byston Well, and as a result, Byston Well itself turns against him.

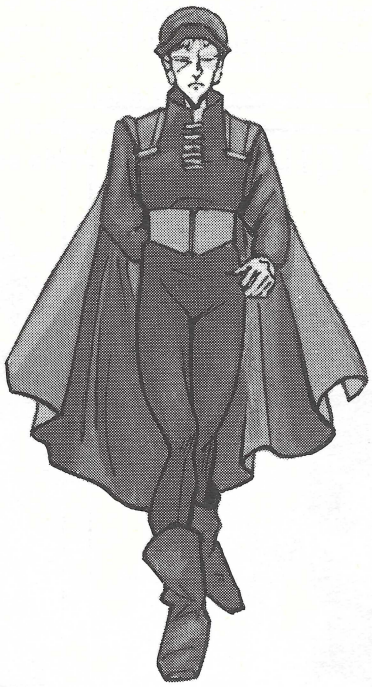
LOUSER LUFT

Drake's wife, she cares little for her daughter Riml and is having an affair with Bishot Hatte. She and Bishott eventually plan to kill Drake and take over his empire.

ETSU

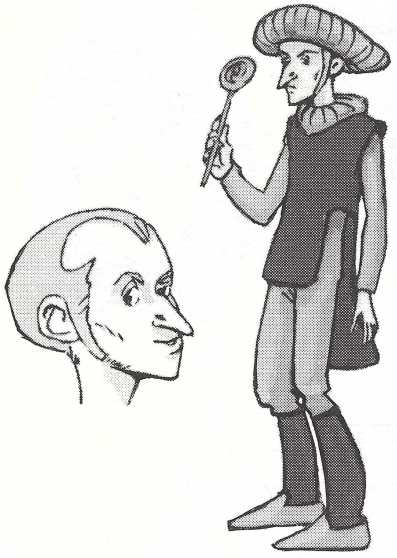
A creature that acts as a living walking stick for Drake Luft. Its name is cane spelled backwards in Japanese. Shown with Drake.

BISHOT HATTE



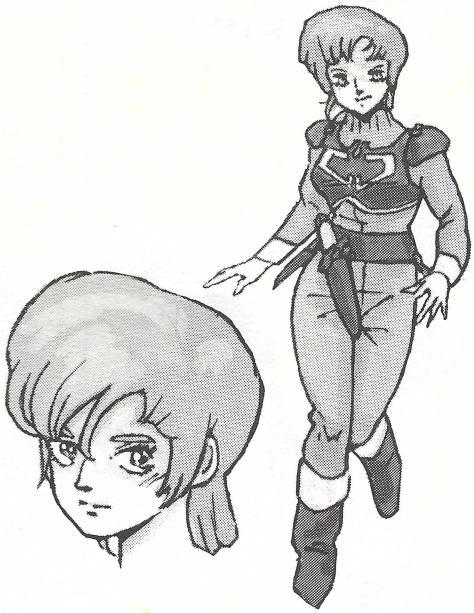
King of the country of Ku, Bishot plans to marry Riml Luft, and thus unite the two countries. In trade for technology to help defend his country, Bishot's forces aid Drake in his conquests. Bishott is having an affair with Louser Luft and plots with her to kill Drake.

FRAUN ELF



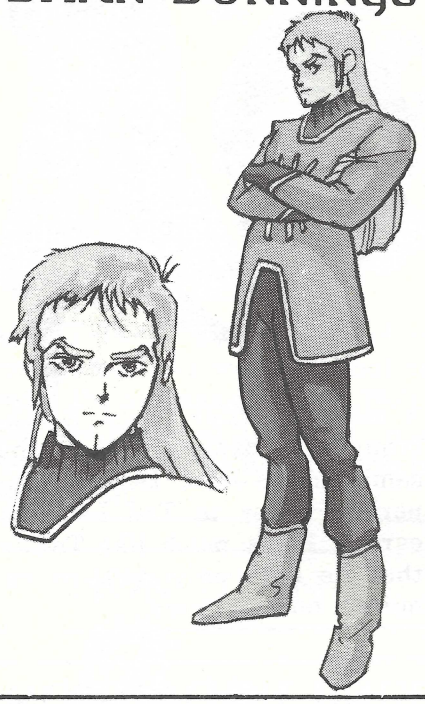
King of the country of A, Fraun Elf inherited the throne from his father. He is extremely stupid and a poor ruler of the country.

RIML LUFT



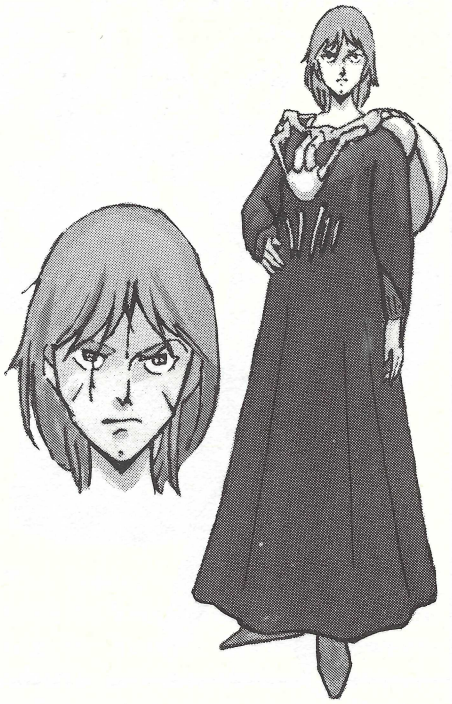
Daughter of Drake and thus heiress to the throne. Riml is in love with Nie Given, though her father has plans to marry her to Bishot Hatte. Riml would rather flee her family than be married someone she dosn't love.

Barn Bonnings



Drake's chief general and best warrior. Barn is an honest and loyal warrior, modelled much after the traditional Japanese samurai. Barn likes Riml Luft and would like to marry her, but she does not love him, and Barn is not noble enough for Drake to consider a marriage between the two. Barn is a rare exception in that being from Byston Well, he has considerably devloped Aura Power. As the story progresses, Barn is dishonored, and he assumes the guise of the "Black Knight," saying he will not remove his mask until he kills Sho Zama.

Shott Weapon

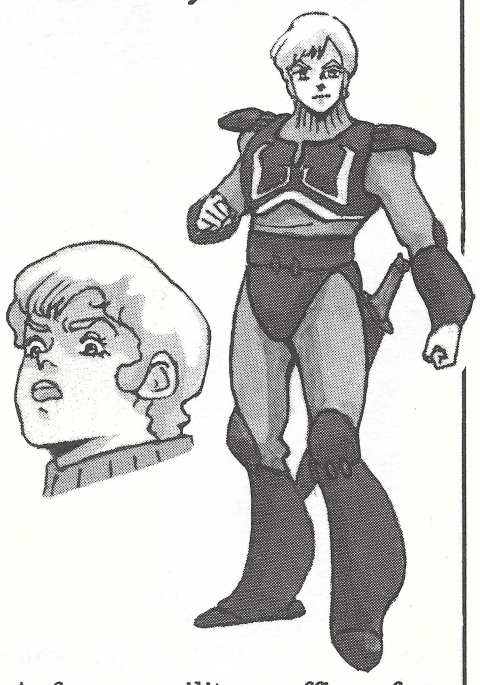


One of the first humans brought to Byston Well. Shott is a robotics engineer from Earth and is the main creator of the technology introduced into Byston Well, including the Aura Battlers. He is in high honor with Drake, as Shott's inventions are what give Drake the power he needs to wage war. During the course of the show, Shott falls in love with Musin Poe. Later, his loyalty to Drake becomes questionable, as his love for Musin and the morality of his work become his chief concern.

Nig Lou

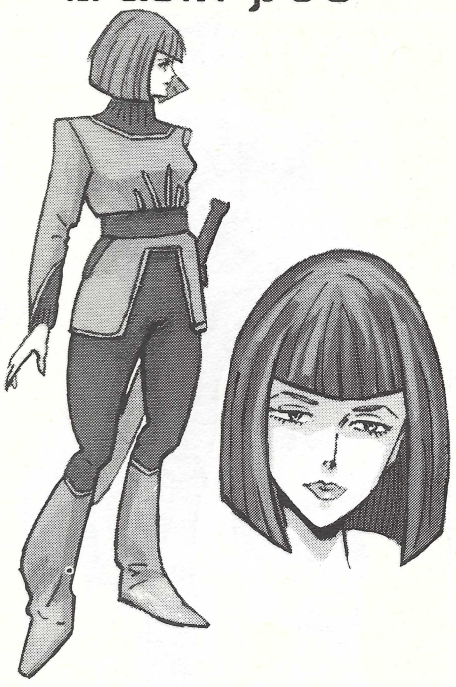
A Galo Ran spy for Barn Bonnings, and a very fast runner.

Tod Guiness



A former military officer from Boston, he was brought to Byston Well at about the same time as Sho. Tod decides he wants the wealth and power that Lord Drake offers. Not particularly sensitive, he looks at things only in terms of how they affect him, and wouldn't risk his neck for anyone else.

Musin Poe

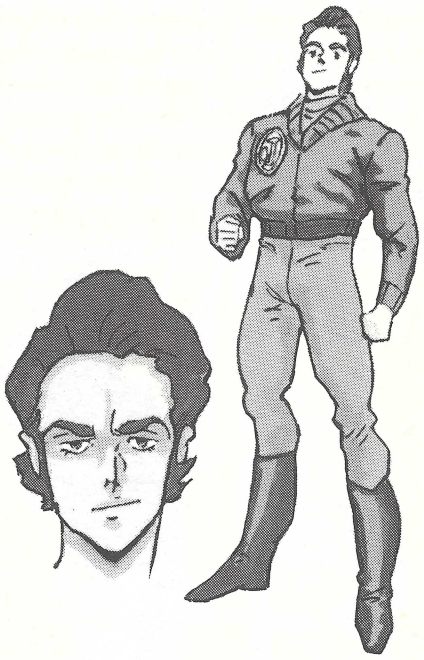


At first just Riml Luft's music teacher, Musin later falls in love with Shott Weapon. For a Common of Byston Well, she possesses fairly strong Aura powers. Shott recommends that she pilot an Aura Battler, and though unsure, she becomes a warrior to please him.

Garalia Nyamhee

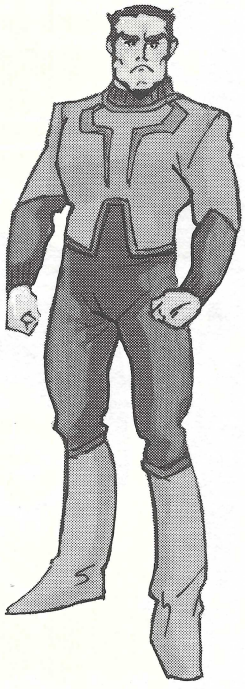
Garlia's father dishonored the family, so for most of her life she has been harrassed for not being a child of a true knight. She has become a warrior in order to reestablish her family's good name. She is tough and has a slightly superior attitude. She is continually fighting to prove that she is as good as any of the male warriors. She flirts with Zet Light to get various favors and only around him does she allow any femininity to show.

Allen Bradey



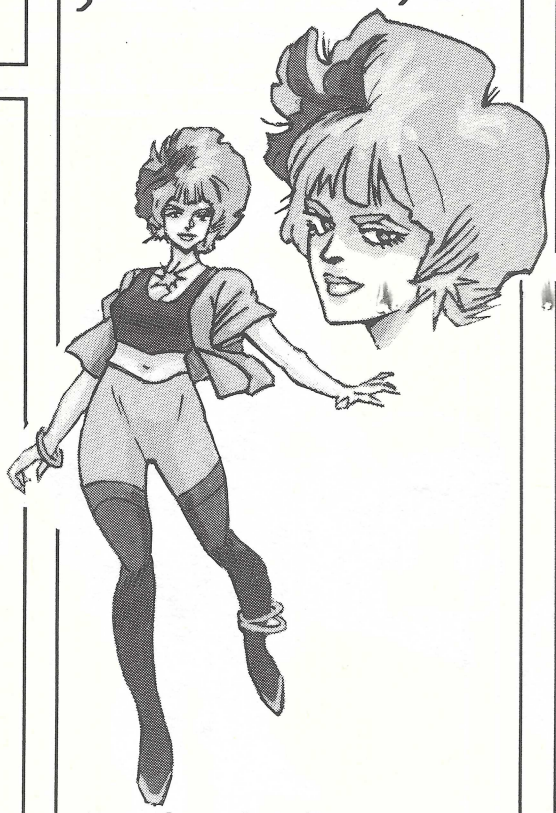
A military officer from Earth, brought to Byston Well at the same time as Jeril. He was a superior officer to Tod back on earth. He is much like Tod in that he does only what is required, nothing more.

Zet Light



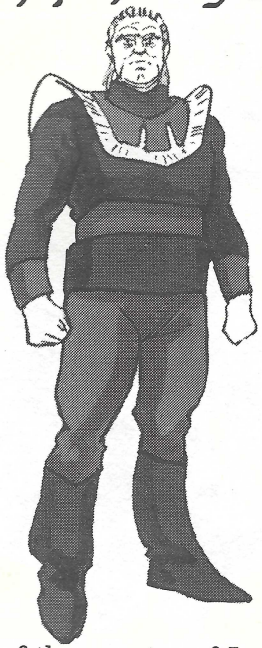
Brought to Byston Well from Earth at the same time as Shott Weapon, Zet specializes in computer science, and has helped Shott produce bio-circutry and other parts necessary for the Aura battlers. He is in love with Garalia Nyamhee.

Jeril Coochibi



A Rock and Roll singer who grew up in the slums of Ireland. Her mother was a prostitute, and she did not know her father. She has a very violent and unstable personality, and seems ecstatic when using her Aura power. She is one of the few people to understand "Hyper" Aura power and its dangers.

King Phoeyzon

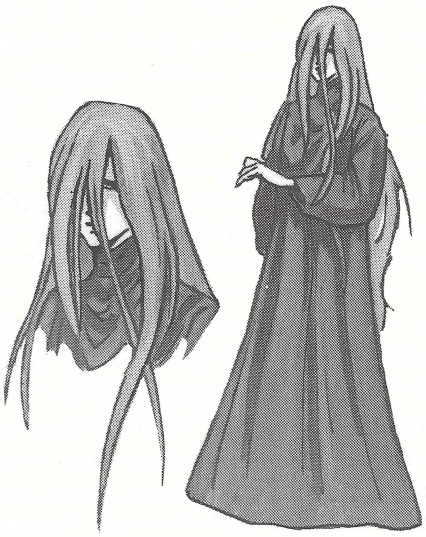


Ruler of the country of Lau, he is a strong ally for Nie Given. The forces of Lau under Phoeyzon's rule become the first real threat to foiling Drakes plan's

SILKY MAU

An A-Fellario, she grew tired of her studies and wandered out to watch the humans of Byston Well. She was captured by Drake, and then forced to bring Earth people to Byston Well.

NAUKU RABE

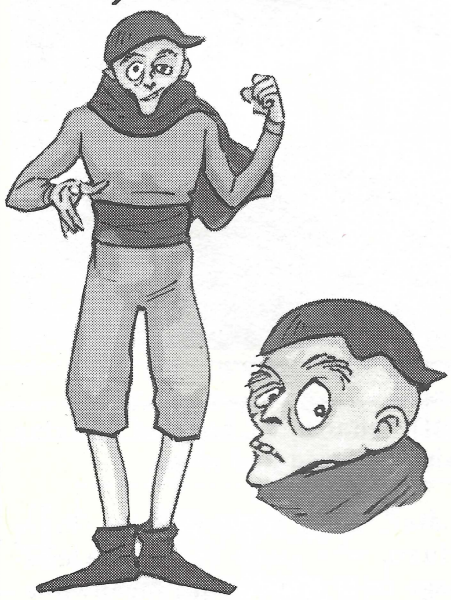


An A-Fellario punished for bringing Marvel Frozen to Byston Wells. Exiled and turned ugly by Jacoba, she changed her name to Nicks Teton. She falls in love with Tod Guiness, but this memory is erased when her punishment is lifted.

JACOBA QUON

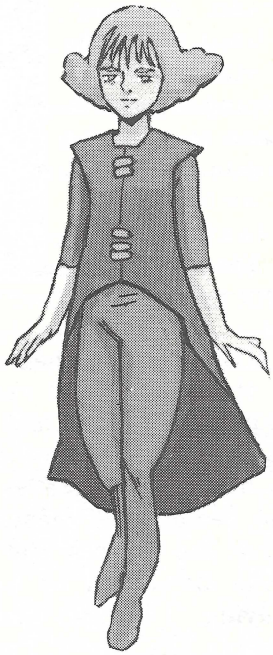
The leader of the A-Fellario she tries to keep them from interfering in human afairs. However when it becomes obvious that technology is not good for Byston Wells, she takes action.

HON WON



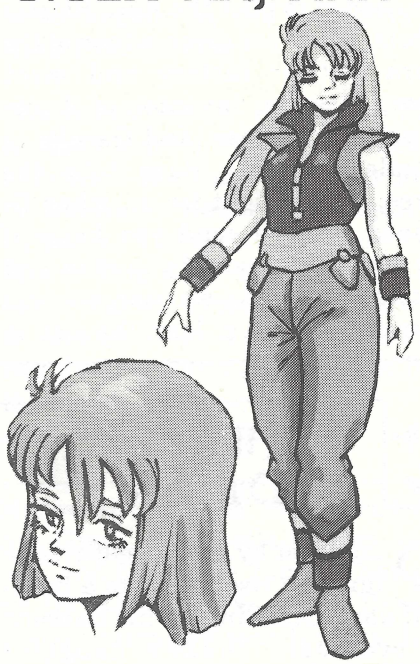
A Galo Ran spy for Nie Given, ugly, but quite good at his job.

ELLE HUNM



A princess from the country of Mi. Her mother, Patfut, the princess of Lau, eloped with her father Pinegan, the King of the country of Mi. When her country is defeated and her father killed, she and her mother are left homeless. They are rejected by King Phoeyzon of Lau, since he disowned his daughter years ago. Elle posesses a strong Aura power which serves her in the form of insight into the events around her.

CIELA RAPANA



A princes of the country of Na, she was lost for ten years in the Ball of Storm until rescued by Sho. She is the center of all good in Byston Wells and the rallying point for forces opposing Drake. She has Aura powers, but resists using them till the story's end.

Aura Battler Dunbine Episodes 1-27

1 "The Holy Warriors"

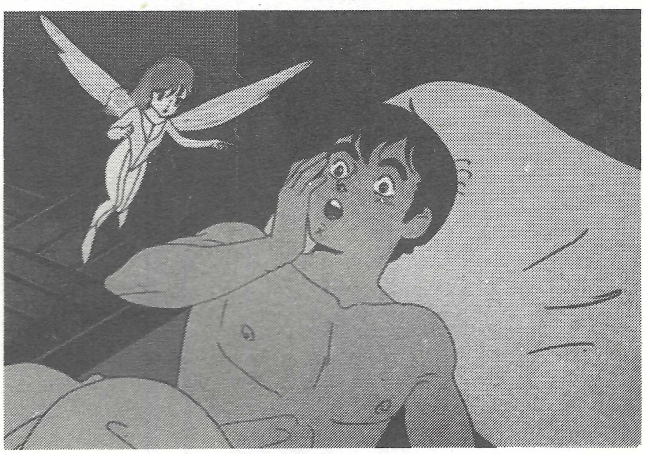
The story begins as Sho Zama heads home after a day of motocross racing. Riding down the highway, Sho is hassled by several of his racing competitors. They try to run him off the road, but Sho escapes by jumping his bike over a car. However, in mid-jump he suddenly vanishes. Sho and his motorcycle reappear in Drake Luft's castle, Lars Wau, brought there by Silky Mau, an A-Fellario enslaved by Drake. Sho, confused about his situation, tries to escape his captors, but is easily subdued by Barn Bonnings.

The next day, Sho and two other surface humans, Tod Guiness and Tokamaku Robski, are taken to visit a Aura Battler factory. The three are told by Barn that because of their greater Aura Powers, they are needed to pilot the Aura Battler robots. They are given a tour of the Aura Battler factory and meet Shott Weapon, inventor of Aura-powered machines, and Garalia, a female warrior. Barn tells the three, "If you fight for us, when finished we will send you home if we can. However, if you stay and become a famous warrior, we will give you a piece of land the size of California." That night at a celebration in Drake's honor, Sho and the others see a demonstration of Drake's newest Aura Battler, the Drumlo. Unexpectedly, unknown forces attack the celebration. It is Nie Given and several of his warriors. They do little damage and are soon chased away.

In the carriage ride home, Drake reveals his plans to his wife, Louser. With money gained from selling technology to other countries, Drake plans to enlarge his army and then provoke other lords into attacking him. Drake will thus appear to King Elf as the hero trying to suppress a rebellion.

Later that night, as Sho sleeps, a Mi-Fellario named Chum Huau slips into his bedroom and scorns him for aiding Drake. She leaves Sho confused over his situation. The following day Sho, Tod, and Tokamaku are sent on a training mission led by Garalia. She purposely leads them into Romun Given's territory, hoping to provoke an attack to test the new pilots. Given's forces ambush them and Tokamaku is killed. Tod stays back, refusing to fight, but Sho engages an enemy Aura Battler, the Dan-O-Shea. The pilot, Marvel Frozen, speaks to him. "I want you to stop helping Drake . . . not knowing of this land, do you realize what he is doing . . . Do you help him, knowing what he is doing?" Confused, Sho responds, "I just got here!" Convinced that he will not help her, Marvel fires on him, and he flees.

Back at Lars Wao, Barn reprimands Tod for his cowardice. Tod replies, "I couldn't fight on my first training mission . . . you didn't even give me any missiles." Barn then congratulates Sho on his performance: "I have much hope for you, young surface man!" As the episode ends, Sho repeatedly hears Marvel Frozen's words haunting his conscience.



2 "Given's Manor"

Disturbed by his adventures so far, Sho rises early to a beautiful day. Standing on his balcony, he overhears Drake's daughter Riml next door, trying to convince Tod Guiness to leave the castle and not help Drake. Tod refuses, saying that he is not interested unless she can help him get back to Earth, which she can't. She berates him, "But Drake will order you to kill people. Can you do that without second thought?" Tod responds, "It's your father that's making me do this—if you've got complaints, talk to him!" Riml leaves upset, and Sho, seeing this, chases her in hopes that she will ask him to help her. She slaps him for being so rude, saying, "I thought there were more people like Marvel Frozen on the surface . . . but people like Tod and Shott laugh at this place. I wish you were more like Marvel Frozen! . . . If you fight Nie Given, he'll defeat you." Riml gives Sho little chance to respond, leaving him confused and alone.

Later, Riml is visited by Chum Huau, who gives her a love message from Nie Given. Meanwhile, Drake has received a letter from Romun Given, requesting a meeting. Drake tells Barn to go and see Romun, but to prepare the Aura Battlers in case no deal can be reached. Sho and Tod are both made knights for Drake, and Sho insists on going with Barn. At Given's manor, Sho sees clearly

for the first time Drake's so-called enemies: Romun Given, his son Nie, and Marvel Frozen. Barn and Romun talk about Drake's recent build-up of weapons. Romun then offers Barn money to change sides. Barn shows some interest, but asks to be given a day to think about a response after learning that the meeting has been overheard by Tsuho, a Mi-Fellario placed by Given to record the meeting. Fearing that King Fraun may learn of Drake's activities from Tsuho, Barn leaves and orders an immediate attack on Given's manor. Given's wife leaves to see King Fraun Elf, taking Tsuho with her so he can tell the king what he has heard. The attack begins, and Barn goes out of his way to destroy the defenseless carriage carrying Given's wife and Tsuho. A battle breaks out, and Sho, sensing Marvel's presence, purposely fails to fire at the Dan-O-Shea, allowing her to survive. After the attack, Barn is angered by Sho's failing to fire his weapons. Sho questions Barn's tactics, but Barn just hits him and tells him to shut up.

3 "Escape From Lars Wao"

A celebration is held at Lars Wao for the successful attack on Given's castle and the supposed destruction of his robot factory. (In reality the factory was not in the castle, but hidden elsewhere.) Tod expresses his satisfaction with the current situation. He likes working for Drake.

Elsewhere, Nie Given and his crew talk of the hopelessness of defeating Drake's forces. Marvel Frozen seems sure that Sho will join them. Meanwhile, Riml is uncertain if Nie survived the attack on Castle Given. She plays at being sick to avoid seeing Bishot Hatte, who has come to visit. Later that day Sho finds Toroh, a drunk Mi-Fellario, and makes a deal, with him, trading stories of the surface for help in meeting Riml. Toroh helps Sho, thinking he is in love with Riml.

That night, Barn finds Toroh and makes him tell of his meeting with Sho. Barn, angered by what he thinks is romantic involvement between Riml and Sho, storms off to Riml's room. Meanwhile, Sho is telling Riml of the attack on Given's manor, and that Romun and Nie escaped. Riml begs Sho to help Nie, when suddenly Barn bursts into the room. Riml calms Barn by explaining that Sho was only telling her stories about the surface.

The next day Barn leads an attack force to attack Given's hidden Aura Battler factory. He tells Riml that he is off to crush the rebellion. However, Riml scorns Barn: "My father is the traitor!" Barn responds, "If we win we've done right. History will be our judge."

Elsewhere, Nie, wanting revenge for his mothers death, assembles his surviving forces for an attack on Lars Wao. He claims he must defeat Drake and prove his father's innocence before Drake makes them appear as the bad guys in King Fraun's eyes.

The attack begins. Sho, not willing to fight Marvel Frozen, decides to help Riml instead. He takes Riml in Dunbine's hands and begins to fly away. Tod attacks Sho, causing him to drop Riml into the forest below. Marvel Frozen, while trying to save Sho from Tod, gets her Battler damaged and also crashes into the forest.

4 "Riml's Hardship"

Riml, surviving her fall into the forest, finds herself not out of trouble yet. Several leechlike creatures called "Boneless" chase her, but she manages to escape. Meanwhile, Sho finds Marvel Frozen and the two escape the forest, also chased by Boneless. Sho then becomes aware of an unusual phenomenon. He seems to hear Marvel speaking in Japanese, and she hears him speaking in English. She tells him that it is a form of telepathy which makes it seem like they're speaking each other's language. Back at Lars Wao, Drake scolds Barn and Garalia for losing Riml. Garalia then goes to see Zet Light, mentioning that she would like to fly an Aura Battler, but Shott appears and tells her that her Aura Powers are too weak. Meanwhile, Sho is introduced to Nie Given, who yells at him and hits him for losing Riml. They go off to search for her, and Drake also dispatches a search party, led by Barn. The two parties meet, and a battle ensues. Nie finds Riml, but she is then captured by Barn. In addition, valuable blueprints for the new Aura enhancers, which Riml had stolen for Nie, are lost in a river.

5 "Keen Endangered"

The Zellana, on its way to Moon Forest to meet Romun Given, heads through the Fog Zone. Meanwhile, back at Lars Wao, Riml is grounded for eternity by her mother.

Back in the Fog Zone, Keen, upset over her treatment by the others, leaves the ship on a Gli-Wing. A giant bird known as a "Gala Woo" attacks and injures her. Sho, flying the Fow, manages to save her by activating the claws of the Fow with just his Aura Powers. Because of her injuries Keen is left with a hermit doctor for care.

Soon after, the Zellana continues on its journey to Moon Valley, but is attacked by Barn, Tod and Garalia. Sho takes off in Dunbine and forces them to retreat. Barn then visits the hermit doctor, but the doctor has hidden Keen and Barn cannot find her.

6 "Tragedy In Moon Valley"

The Zellana continues on towards Moon Forest to rendezvous with Romun Given. Back at Drake's base, Barn receives word of Romun Given's location.

Chum Huau gathers all the fireflies of Moon Valley and makes a signal for Romun Given. However, this proves unsuccessful, and Sho goes out in search of Romun on a Gli-Wing. Romun, lost in the Maze Valley, is ambushed by Galo Ran bandits who want his cargo. Sho arrives just in time and forces the bandits to flee. He then goes to get the Zellana. While he is gone, Tod and Garalia attack Romun, destroying a wagon carrying supplies for the Zellana.

The Zellana arrives to help Romun, but Garalia grabs him with the claws of her Wing Caliber. A battle ensues. Tod accidently hits Garalia, and Romun falls to the ground. Garalia and Tod retreat, and when Nie finds his father, he is mortally wounded. As Romun dies he tells Nie, "Drake is planning to invade the country of Mi. Be sure to take care of everyone." Sho, blaming himself, says, "If the Aura Battler is controlled by my life energy, then if my power had been fully released I could have saved him."

7 "Night Before The Battle"

Nie Given sneaks into Lars Wao disguised as a farm boy in an attempt to rescue Riml. Meanwhile, Drake tells Garalia, "When you killed Romun, you found a letter. Take this letter to King Fraun Elf, and tell him that the country of Mi is going to turn against him, but not to worry, we will take care of it for him." The letter also implies that the Given family were traitors and are working with Mi. Garalia, knowing that the story is false, goes ahead anyway, not wishing to disobey Drake. Elsewhere, Shott Weapon gives Tod a new type of Battler, the Virunvee, because Tod has lost so many of the Drumlo type. Keen Kiss goes to visit her father, Kibuts Kiss, hoping to convince him not to side with Drake, but he will not listen to her. He is already preparing to go to war with Drake against the country of Mi.

Garalia arrives at Elf Castle to deliver the letter. The king, being a complete fool, agrees with Drake's plan, never even looking at the letter. Garalia is disturbed by both Drake's and King Fraun's actions.

Nie, still in disguise, enters Drake's castle in search of Riml. Inside he encounters Kibuts Kiss. Nie reveals his true identity to Kibuts, and Kibuts, being an old friend, helps him reach Riml's room. Nie and Riml try to escape, but they are discovered by Barn and Riml is recaptured. Sho and Marvel, spotting a signal flare, go off to rescue Nie. Nie meanwhile steals a Drumlo and attempts to kill Drake, but Barn (flying the Virunvee) stops him. Sho and Marvel arrive and pick up Nie, and the three escape.

8 "Once More Lars Wao"

Sho is upset by Nie's previous one man plan, feeling that Nie thought only of meeting Riml and not how it could affect the others. He decides that he wants to free Silky Mau, hoping she will return him to Earth.

Meanwhile, Garalia returns from Elf Castle with direct orders that Drake is to supress any rebellion. However, Garalia is told that she will not participate in the upcomming battle, but must stay behind with Tod to guard Lars Wao.

Sho, still upset, deserts the Zellana and enters Drake's province alone. Discovering that Drake's army is away attacking Mi, Sho meets Hon Won and has him tell Nie to launch a raid on Lars Wao. The Zellana attacks Lars Wao, inflicting great damage to the castle. Nie and Sho manage to free both Riml and Silky Mau, but surrender them both when Louser Luft takes Riml hostage and threatens to kill her. The Zellana retreats, leaving Riml and Silky behind.

9 "Heaven and Earth

Our heroes, having repeatedly failed in their plans to stop Drake and free Riml, head off to Kustanga Hill, where they hope to get help from the A-Fellario. Kustanga Hill lies behind the Wall of Storm, an area of dark clouds and dangerous winds. The Zellana penetrates the Wall of Storm to discover a world full of beautiful flowers and Mi-Fellario. Chum Huau hides, fearing her sisters will punish her and make her stay here.

By talking to several Mi-Fellario they learn that the A-Fellario live in the Land of Water, reachable via the Kara mountain which penetrates the roof of the world into the Land of Water. The Zellana, proceeding up Kara mountain, enters the Land of Water and immediately attracts the attention of the A-Fellario. Jacoba Quon, leader of the A-Fellario, comes to question the intruders.

Jacoba: Fearless commons, why have you come to the resting place of the A-Fellario? The punishment for intrusion is severe.

Nie: We have a favor to ask of you.

Jacoba: Why should we listen to Commons?

Nie: There are surface humans among us. Your people brought them to Byston Well.

Jacoba: That is not our business.

Sho: We came here just to talk to you.

Marvel: You can quiet the people who do evil with machines.

Jacoba: There is no future for those who will die. There is no past for those who died. They sleep eternal. Begone, people of the surface! Byston Well is the resting place of souls and has nothing to do with people who have flesh.

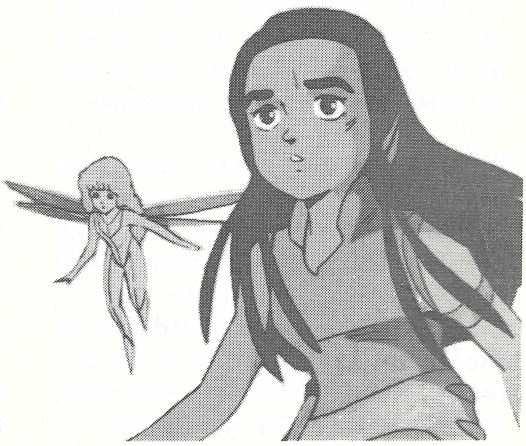
With that, Jacoba causes the Zellana to be swept back into the Wall of Storm, and for a few seconds they materialize over Dallas, Texas; then they are back in Byston Well. Keen complains that their trip accomplished nothing. However, it affected Sho greatly. With a changed attitude, he says, "If the city we saw was Dallas, then the two worlds are connected. Not like the A-Fellario said—they are related, and if we become good with our Aura powers, we might be able to bridge the Aura Road ourselves . . . We must teach the A-Fellario that we are related, and that the existence of Aura machines destroys souls."

The Zellana heads off to Mi to help stop Drake's forces, which are now advancing through the country. The Zellana arrives and Sho fights Tod, beating him once again.

Tod complains to Barn afterwards that Garalia did not help him, and that he will never win against Dunbine in only a Drumlo.

10 "Father and Child"

Barn gathers Drake's forces for an attack on Red Bar Fort, which is one of the largest forts in Mi. Kibuts Keen arrives with his forces to aid in the attack. Barn decides to let Kibuts lead the attack on Red Bar, and soon after, it falls. After the attack, Kibuts encounters Keen, who has come to try and convince her father to stop the invasion. Kibuts tells Keen, "You are no longer my daughter! From this point on I sever all my ties with you!" As Keen leaves, her father says to himself, "Take care of her, Sho." Meanwhile, Barn prepares for an assult on Chiron Castle. He is unsure of Kibuts's loyalty, and decides to test him by ordering him to attack the Zellana. Kibuts, not wanting to hurt Keen, mounts a half-hearted attack on the Zellana which results in his death.



11 "Chiron Castle's Defense"

Pinnegan, King of Mi and Elle Hunm's father, discusses a possible peace treaty with Drake. He hopes that if he fights Drake, then his father-in-law, King Phoeyzon, will forgive him. (Pinnegan eloped with King Phoeyzon's daughter, Panfut.) The Zellana arrives and is welcomed at Chiron. Keen fears that they might be traded to Drake in order to save Castle Chiron. The group meets Elle Hunm, who is amazed to meet surface people and see that they are not much different from her.

Meanwhile, Garalia takes off without permission to attack the Zellana, and Tod is sent to bring her back. Garalia, upset, blames Kibuts's failure for allowing the Zellana to enter Chiron.

Pinnegan sends a messenger to Drake. The messenger tells Drake that Mi had no secret treaty with Romun Given. Drake admits that his letter to King Fraun was a trick, but says that he now has the King's permission to invade. He then kills the messenger.

The next day Drake attacks Chiron Castle. Garalia flies a Drumlo but is easily downed because of her weak Aura Power. Meanwhile, King Pinnegan hides Elle and Panfut in Dunbine. The castle falls to Drake's forces and King Pinnegan is killed. The Zellana leaves Mi heading to Lau to seek aid from Elle's grandfather, King Phoeyzon.

12 "Garalia's Pursuit"

Garalia, obsessed with destroying the Zellana, teams up with Tod, and they take off towards Lao. Garalia is proud that Drake has personally entrusted her with a Drumlo to destroy the Zellana.

Drake declares to the people of Mi that he has come to ensure peace in Byston Wells. He orders all men over fifteen years and under fifty to be drafted into his army: however, twenty bags of gold can exempt one from the draft.

Upon reaching Tartara, the crew of the Zellana meets with King Phoeyzon, who agrees to help everyone except his daughter, Panfut, or his granddaughter, Elle. Phoeyzon's technicians study Dunbine and begin work to improve their current Aura Battlers.

Garalia and Tod reach Tartara and disembark from their battlers in order to spy on the improvements being made to King Phoeyzon's Aura Battlers.

Elsewhere, Elle Hunm explains to Sho that she is gifted with an inner sight and can see the connection between Byston Well and the other world. "They used to connect only with a barrier for life and death. Opening the Aura Road has allowed living people to come to Byston Well. I think this is a bad omen."

At this time, with information from Tod and Garalia, Drake prepares to enter Lau, claiming he is pursuing fugitives.

At Tartara, several former technicians from Given's manor arrive to help King Phoeyzon improve his Aura Battlers.

Tod and Garalia makes a surprise attack on Tartara, and Dunbine is damaged. King Phoeyzon joins in the fight, and with his aid Sho is able to defeat Tod and Garalia despite Dunbine's condition. It becomes apparent that Sho's Aura Power is stronger than ever before. After the attack, Panfut and Elle leave Tartara to go hide in the mountains. They receive no help from Phoeyzon, who sadly watches them leave.

13 "Tod's Storm"

The episode opens with Keen on a practice flight in the Fow. Sho is with her as they fly around the Hole of Galdora. Elsewhere, Tod and Shott are talking. Tod, noting how much Dunbine's power has impressed Barn, demands that Shott Weapon build him a Dunbine as well. Shott coldly replies, "Train your Aura Power first." A few minutes later, Garalia shows up in a dress, and Tod, on horseback, offers her a ride. He asks why she is all dressed up. She tells Tod that she was dressed up for Zet Light, but he turned her down. Tod asks if she would be dissatisfied with him as a substitute.

Shott introduces a new version of the Virunvee, which is equipped with an Aura enhancer, allowing people with weaker Aura Powers to pilot the machine. Silky Mau is then brought out and forced to open the Aura Road, bringing three new people from Earth: Jeril Coochibi, Allen Bradey, and Fay Chisoka.

Tod and Garalia take off after the Zellana on their own. Both feel threatened by the appearance of the new pilots and want to prove their superiority. They steal the Virunvee and a Drumlo and attack Tartara. Tod rams his Wing Caliber into the castle, continuing to fight in his Aura Battler. Sho defeats Tod, causing him to crash into the Hole of Galdora. Garalia returns to base alone and is reprimanded. Meanwhile, Tod, presumed dead, actually lies injured in the Hole of Galdora as a strange girl watches over him.

14 "Castle Elf Battle"

The episode begins as Sho, Marvel and the others are hunting the giant insects called "Kimai Lug." It is from the outer shells of these giant insects that the transparent canopies of the Aura Battlers are made. After getting back from the hunt, King Phoeyzon tells Nie and the others to head for the country of Li, and try to get their support.

Meanwhile, King Fraun Elf receives word that Drake is sending an attack force to take Castle Elf. Fraun, refuseing to believe that Drake could be his enemy. "No, he's our friend. Drake gave me these gifts, he fears me so much he's giving me gifts! I buy everything he sells ." Fraun says, refusing to put up a defense.

Back at Lars Wao, Shott reveals his latest Aura Battler the Bastone. He also takes time out to warn Zet not to get involved with Garalia. Elsewhere, the country of Li gets an invitation to join Drake, but are want to hear out Nie, before committing to Drake. During the meeting the represenitive from Li tells Nie that Drake's army is advancing on Castle Elf. Drake before a large group of people makes his declaration of war. He says, " Why aren't the people of 'A' happy? It's because we have an ineffective King! So, now we will have a new king!" With this, Drake launches his attack on Elf castle. The outdated Aura Battlers of Elf are quickly dispatched. Seizing the moment, Barn orders the ground troops to assault the castle. Suddenly, Sho and Marvel appear, attacking Barn's Aura Battler's and defeating them. The ground troops, now without air support, are beaten and are forced to retreat. During the battle Sho's Aura Power seem to have increased. Barn says that Sho seems twice as powerful as before.

15 "The Unmoving Fraun Elf"

While drakes forces are busy fixing their Battlers, King Elf sends a messenger to Nie Given. He asks for Given's help. Given agrees to help defend the castle, but only if Fraun promises to help him attack Drake's main base. Elf agrees with Given's plan, but would rather have Given guard Castle Elf instead.

During this time, Shott, back in Lars Wao, begins to plot against Drake. He confides to Musin Poe his plans to kill Drake and make himself king.

Back at Drake's base, Given's forces begin to attack. They avoid engaging Drake' Aura Battlers and concentrate on knocking out his equipment and supplies. The attack goes well, but Fraun Elf's forces don't arrive to help. Without the needed support of Fraun's forces Given and his men must retreat. Fraun, fearing for his own personal safety, didn't want his men to join the battle and leave him unprotected. Barn meanwhile orders an immediate counter strike on Castle Elf, before Dunbine can be rearmed and re-enter the fight. Hon Won, Nie's spy, hears this and goes to warn Nie. However, Nie, still angered by Fraun's cowardice, doesn't want to help Fraun. "If we had been losing the fight back there instead of winning, we would have died!" Keen, seeing the seriousness of this, goes to help Elf and Sho and the others soon follow. The help arrives just in time, but not without its costs. Sho, in the Dunbine, is bested by Garalia (in the new Bastone) and Barn. Afterwards, Nie consoles Sho. "Its not your fault," he says, "Drake's Battlers keeps getting better while ours stay the same."

16 "Battle over Tokyo"

At Castle Elf, Sho and the others repair Dunbine and prepare ten new Bozune type suits that just arrived from Tartara Castle. Drake's forces prepare to attack Castle Elf again, using a plan prepared by Shott Weapon. Barn is told by Drake to learn from Shott weapon, since Barn's previous attacks have failed. Garalia prepares to leave in her suit the Bastol, but Zet tells her to be careful since her Aura Increaser doesn't have all the bugs worked out yet. The attack begins, and Garalia and Sho engage in combat. Garalia's Aura increaser goes wild, producing a huge Aura output which opens the Aura road, and teleports both Garalia and Sho to Earth.

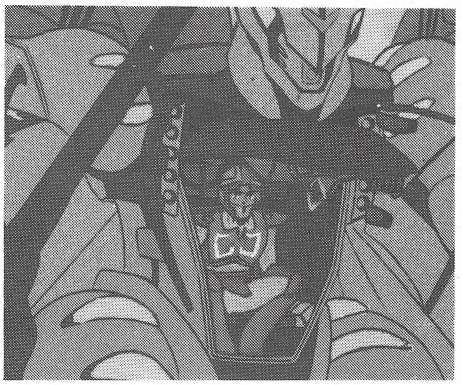
Sho appears on Earth in his own yard. His parents see him, but are not sure he is really their son. "No son of mine would come back in that (pointing to Dunbine)!" says Sho's mother. Sho continues to try to convince his parents of his authenticity but is interupted when he sees Garalia's robot on a news report. Immediatly, Sho rushes off to find her. Garalia, confused because of her unfamiliarity with Earth, begins to attack things. Sho arrives trying to calm her, but she responds, "If you brought me here then this is enemy territory, I'll kill you." A fight ensues, and the two discover that their Byston Well weapons are more destructive on Earth, equaling a small nuclear warhead. The fight continues as Japanese army helicopters close in

17 "Surface People"

The battle between Sho and Garalia continues over Tokyo. The army helicopter engages them both, and while Sho surrenders, Garalia leaves the area. Sho lands at a nearby airbase and is taken into custody by the military. He is questioned about his purpose on Earth and told that over 300,000 people were killed by his battle over Tokyo. The military doesn't believe Sho's story about Byston Well, and his mother still thinks that he is not her real son.

Elsewhere, Garalia realizes that Aura Power increases on Earth, but that its consumption rate increases as well. She realizes how lonely and scared Sho and the other surface people must have felt when they first came to Byston Well. Growing hungry, she steals food from two people, but they warn nearby authorities and she is forced to flee.

Back at the base, the military hears of Garalia's activities. They send out a task force to search for her. While most of the base is gone, Sho and Chum escape in Dunbine. Chum suggests that Sho and Garalia combine Auras and attempt to bridge the Aura Road to Byston Well. As Sho prepares to talk to Garalia, helicopters appear, and Sho is told that if he does not land the military will kill his parents.



18 "Light Of Garalia"

In Byston Well the battle continues as Drake's troops enter Elf castle. King Fraun slips off the castle wall and dies. The ten new Aura Battlers that Phoeyzon sent are destroyed. Nie and the others begin to lose hope: "Can we do it without Sho?"

Back on Earth, Sho lands to talk to the military. They send his parents out to see him, giving his father a gun and telling him to shoot Sho if he won't surrender. Sho and his parents talk. Sho says that they never really cared for him in the past. His mother denies this and says she loved him all the while, thus admitting that the man in front of her is her son. Upset by her admission, she fires on him, and he leaves to go meet Garalia, hoping to return to Byston Well. The military once again threatens Sho's parents, but he says, "I am an alien from the 28th solar system and they are not my parents," thus saving his parents any embarrassment or bad press.

Garalia meanwhile battles several military jets. She prepares to attack one when she is suddenly haunted by the spirit of the jet pilot's son, who demands that she not kill his father. This upsets Garalia and she begins to remember her childhood harassment by other children. Garalia decides to trust Sho, not wanting to die on Earth in vain. The two combine Aura strengths and attempt to open the Aura Road, but Garalia is not strong enough to withstand the massive Aura output, and she dies. Sho survives, but is still on Earth, harried by the military.

19 "Holy Warrior Sho Zama"

Sho, upset at his failure to bridge the Aura Road, attempts once again with renewed effort. He tells Chum, "If I don't get back, my friends are going to get killed, and I don't want to die here." With this determination Sho is able to open the Aura Road. In Byston Well, Elle Hunm and her mother Panfut are being chased by a huge bird, called a Zubada, when suddenly Dunbine appears and crashes, scaring the Zubada away. Sho emerges from Dunbine, greeting Elle. She tells him that she wished for help, and then suddenly he appeared. Sho is amazed at having crossed the Aura Road alone, and fears that Drake may some day cross it to invade Earth. In disguise, he goes to a town and confirms that Drake has taken Castle Elf. He then heads to Tartara while Elle and Panfut remain in the woods to continue Elle's Aura Power training. Reaching Tartara, Sho learns from King Phoeyzon that the Zellana is awaiting him in the Crystal Forest. Sho swears his allegiance to King Phoeyzon to fight Drake. In return he is accepted by all the King's knights.

In the Crystal Forest, Jeril and the other trainees search for the Zellana, which has hidden itself among the many crystal pillars. The Zellana attempts to avoid contact, but is discovered. They engage Jeril, and the battle goes badly. However, Sho arrives in Dunbine, chasing the trainees away. Marvel is extremely glad to see Sho return, and greets him with a long embrace.

Back on Earth, Sho's mother regrets not having convinced her son to stay. She is afraid that it must have been Sho's ghost, come back to haunt her for his unloved childhood.

20 "Musin's Pursuit"

Recovered from her earlier defeat, Musin asks Fay, who was brought from Earth with Jeril, to join her in an attack on the Zellana. Musin hopes to destroy the Zellana and rescue Riml.

Back on the Zellana, a rivalry has developed between Riml and Keen to see who is the better pilot for the Dan-O-Shea. While Keen tries to prove her worth she accidentally wrecks the Dan-O-Shea and is spotted by Fay and Musin. Dunbine comes to the rescue, and Musin and Fay follow to find the location of their new base. Fay causes a diversion to allow Musin to board the Zellana and find Riml. Suddenly the Dan-O-Shea launches without orders. Fay shoots it down, unaware that Riml was piloting the Battler. Sho goes out to help Riml and kills Fay by knocking his grenade back at him. Musin's brothers, who were flying back-up in Aura Bombers, are also killed.

After the battle, Nie is angry at Riml for attacking without orders. He tells her to go home, but she asks for forgiveness. So Nie instead, treats Riml as a disobedient soldier and simply hits her.

21 "Assault Vs Assault"

Under King Phoeyzon's orders the Zellana prepares to launch a series of attacks against each of Drake's Aura Battler factories. Sho doesn't like the plan, saying it is too slow to attack each factory one by one. He would much rather make one attack to kill Drake himself, but he eventually agrees to Phoeyzon's plan.

Elsewhere Tod, having survived his earlier crash in the Hole of Galdora, has recovered, nursed back to health by Nicks Teton. He leaves her, not realizing her love for him.

The Zellana attacks one of Drake's factories, destroying it. However, Riml is injured during the fight. Tod arrives at Castle Kemi and swears allegiance to Bishot Hatte, saying, "I figure the King of Ku is the one to conquer Ku." Tod is not interested in money, but just wants a battler to use to kill Sho. Hatte gives him his new experimental battler, the Vierres. Hatte then tells Tod to go get Riml back and he leaves to seek out Sho and the Zellana.

Sho, feeling that he is responsible for Riml's injury in the Dan-O-Shea, goes to give her some flowers to make her feel better. However, he is unaware that he is giving her proposal flowers, which are traditionally used to ask someone's hand in marriage. He is rather embarrassed about his mistake, and Nie, seeing the flowers, becomes worried that Riml has agreed to marry Sho. The Zellana reaches Milo Mountain, one of Drake's Aura Battler factories, and launches an attack. However, the factory has long been abandoned, and they are ambushed by many enemy Battlers. They discover that many of Drake's older Battlers, such as the Drumlo, have been upgraded. The fight is tough, and suddenly Tod appears, flying, the Vierres. Tod and Allen clash, unsure of each other's intentions, but it become clear they both want Sho dead. Tod attacks Sho, and their combined Auras create an opening in the Aura Road, throwing them both into a strange space. They fight to a draw and both return to Byston Well.

Afterwards, Sho comments that Drake keeps building newer Aura Battlers, and they also need new ones if they are to fight effectively.

22 "United Battleline"

In order to force the Zellana to defend Lao and Na, King Phoeyzon sends a new Battler, the Botune, to Nie, and has an Aura converter installed in Dunbine. Captain Aibu, from the transport delivering the new equipment, informs Nie that Drake's forces are preparing to invade Lao and Na. While this is going on, a spy for Tod infiltrates the Gaba Island base and marks the Dan-O-Shea's foot with phosphorescent paint, making it easy to find. While this is going on, Tod is hiding on the nearby island of Wok, and encounters Barn. Barn is desperate, since only through beating Sho can he regain face. Shott has entrusted Barn with a Leprechaun, and Tod laughs at Barn for being reduced to Shott's private soldier. Barn degrades himself, allowing Tod to order him around. He agrees to work under Tod, and the two together decide to attack the Zellana.

Tod and Barn launch their attack on the Zellana, and Barn, not knowing Riml's Dan-O-Shea was marked for capture, shoots her down. Some Galo Ran working for Tod capture Riml. Sho tries to rescue her, but Barn attacks him. Barn and Sho fall under water and continue their battle. Dunbine, damaged, begins to fill with water. Dunbine's new Aura converter runs wild and increases Sho's Aura Power, to the extent of allowing him to split the sea. Tod flees, leaving Barn to fight Sho alone. Sho defeats Barn, who retreats with more hatred than ever for Sho.

23 "Barn's Revenge"

The Zellana, still in the Crystal Forest, heads toward the Shore of Rian. The ship almost crashes into a giant crystal pillar, but Sho saves it by boosting the engines with his Aura Power.

Back at Drake's base, Drake and Shott discuss their future plans and Barn's ineffectiveness in commanding past missions. They decide to send Barn out alone on a special mission to prove his value, and also make plans to disown Barn if he fails again. Hon Won overhears this and goes to warn Nie.

Barn takes off alone to attack the Zellana in a new Aura Battler, the Leprechaun. He locates the Zellana and attacks, damaging its power unit which causes it to slowly lose altitude. Heading into a fog bank, the Zellana manages to lose Barn and land at a secret Lao base in the Cave of Dulf along the shore of the Sea of Len.

The Zellana is spotted by Nig Low, who informs Barn of its location. Barn infiltrates the base, hoping to capture Sho alive so he can learn how to go to the surface (Earth).

Sho wants to make a lone attempt to kill Drake, and leaves in Dunbine and the Fow. However, Barn, hidden aboard the Fow, forces Sho to change direction and land. At the Cave of Dulf, the others notice Sho's course change and take off to see why he changed his plans.

Barn tortures Sho, but discovers little except that Garalia died trying to bridge the Aura Road. Marvel and others arrive and rescue Sho, forcing Barn to flee.

24 "Riml the Runaway"

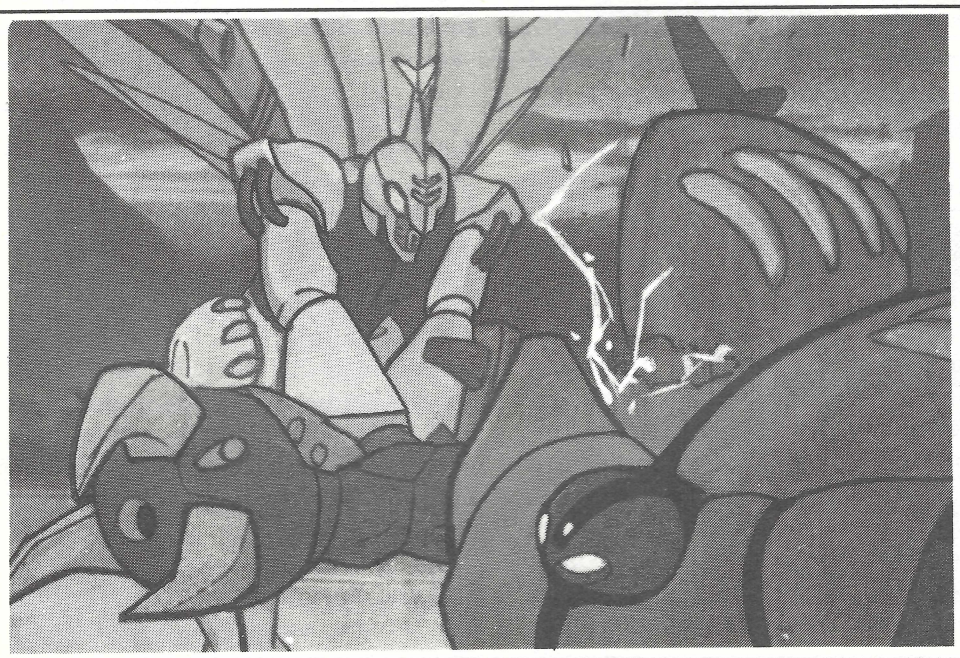
Riml bribes a guard and escapes Lars Wao. Louser orders troops dispatched to search for her. Musin Poe, now a warrior, heads out in a Virunvee, followed by her father and two brothers. Meanwhile, over the Gestal Valley, Riml crashes her Gli Wing and is captured by Galo Ran bandits, who plan to sell her back to Drake.

Hon Won informs Nie that Riml has escaped Lars Wao. Nie is unable to search for her at this time since he and the Zellana must return to Tartara to help defend it against a possible attack by Drake, so Sho goes out in Dunbine to search for Riml.

Musin and her family discover Riml and get her backfrom the Galo Ran. Dunbine appears, and Musin hires the Galo Ran to help capture it. Sho attacks Musin and senses that she has higher Aura Power than Barn. He has trouble defeating her. She shatters his canopy, and a Galo Ran boards Dunbine, trying to kill Sho. With some difficulty he gets rid of the Galo Ran and tricks Musin by pretending to be hurt. Musin crashes and accidentally falls on her own father, killing him. After the fight, Sho is able to rescue Riml and reunite her with Nie.

25 "Warrior Riml Luft"

At the Dulf base, the chief mechanic, Dolple, expresses his opinion that Riml could be a spy. To prove her honesty, she goes out to fight in the Dan-O-Shea. Elsewhere, Shott tells Barn to take a vacation and that he is no longer considered a warrior. The Zellana prepares to move the base to Gaba Island for more safety. On the way to Gaba Island they are ambushed by several of Drake's Aura Battlers. The fight goes poorly, but Riml arrives and saves them, proving she is not a spy.



26 "Elle's Spiritual Power"

While searching Bondu mountain, Jeril discovers Elle Hunm and her mother, Panfut. Jeril, suspecting that Elle was responsible for bringing Sho back through the Aura Road, tries to capture her for Drake. In the confusion a monster attacks the group. Panfut is killed, and Elle manages to escape Jeril. Elle arrives at King Phoeyzon's Namaro Beach fort, where she finds the Zellana being resupplied. She tries to see Sho, but is chased away by guards who think she is a spy. But Sho finds her and she rejoins the group. Sho wants to fight Drake and find out how powerful his huge new battle cruiser is. One of King Phoeyzon's men tells him not to worry, Lao has its own big ship. Hon Won arrives to tell everyone that Bishot Hatte has officially joined Drake and his military units are linking up with Drake's.

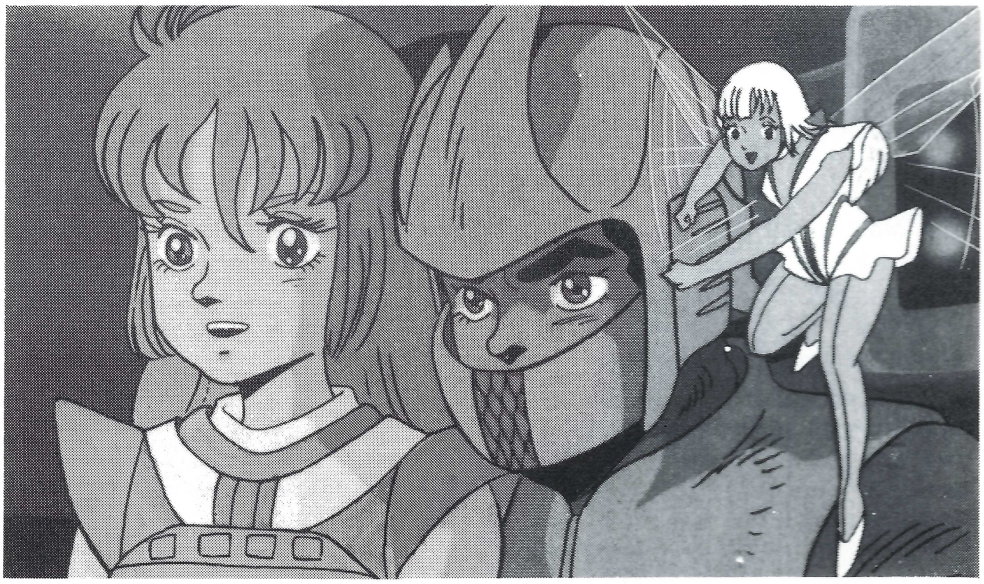
The Zellana heads off to scout for Drake's and Bishot Hatte's forces, which are assembling to attack Lau. On the way they meet Jeril. Sho and Marvel attack her and destroy her Battler. After the fight, Elle has a vision of a huge dark shadow ahead. They change course to avoid it, but are unaware that it is Drake's huge new battle cruiser, the Will-O-Wisp. On board the Will-O-Wisp, Drake and Shott discuss the future invasion of Lao. They suspect that something may be happening there, since it has been so quiet. The Zellana engages several Aura Battlers, and Tod and Sho meet. Once again the their combined Auras cause a disruption in the Aura Road and they are transported elsewhere.

27 "Queen of the Red Storm"

Tod and Sho are blown into the land of The Red Storm and are separated. There, in a strange red desert, Sho sees a Mi-Fellario named El-Fino who is being chased by several Galo Ran. Sho chases off the Galo Ran, saving El-Fino. Meanwhile, Elle Hunm tells Marvel that she senses Sho is still alive in Byston Well, but she is not sure where. Back in the desert, the leader of the Galo Ran, Sindro, returns on a huge dragon called a Luguw. Sho is unable to hurt the Luguw, so he and El-Fino escape to a forest of giant mushrooms. There by a lake they meet Ciela Rapana, El-Fino's mistress. She somehow knows all about Sho and is glad to finally meet him. She informs Sho that they are inside the Ball of Storm. Ciela was tricked into the Ball by Sindro and has been trapped here ever since. Sindro locates Sho and Ciela and attacks. Sho takes Dunbine to battle the Luguw, but once again has trouble.

El-Fino spots Tod's Aura Battler nearby and goes to ask for his help. Tod, figuring he may need help getting out of this strange place, goes to Sho's aid. Tod attacks the Luguw and to Sho's amazement, kills it with only one blow. Tod then decides to kill Sho, but finds his Aura Power hampered. Sho, Ciela and El-Fino all escape from the Ball of Storm and reappear in the country of Na.

Once there, Ciela reveals that she is the Queen of Na. She is grateful to Sho, but says to him, "You are not yet a Aura Warrior. You do not know what you are fighting for. You do not care for Byston Well. Why haven't you killed Shott, Drake or Bishot? Only then will you be an Aura Warrior. I owe you more than words, but you can't do battle with words. You must concentrate on fighting, you must have a purpose." She then says to herself, "He will be the perfect choice to fly Billbine."



Dunbine

Created by:
Yoshiyuki Tomino

Mechanical Design:
Yutaka Izubuchi

Produced by:
Nippon Sunrise

BUBBLE GUM CRISIS

MEGA-TOKYO 2032 THE STORY OF THE KNIGHT SABERS

INTRODUCTION

Bubble Gum Crisis is an Original Animation Video (OAV), which follows two currently popular trends in animation storylines, the first being the take-off of live action superhero stories, i.e. the Space Sheriff series, and the other being the use of android villains, stemming from the popularity of such notables as Terminator. In addition, it uses western science-fiction settings, similar to Blade Runner and Max Headroom. It is a story of young Japanese using superscience to protect Tokyo from the threat of a monstrous takeover by genetic engineering gone awry.

STORY BY:
TOSHIMUTSU SUZUKI
DIRECTOR:
MUSANI AKIYAMA
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MEGA-TOKYO

The year is 2032. The setting is Tokyo, which is in the final stages of reconstruction a few years after being hit by a devastating earthquake that leveled most of central Japan. The rebirth of Tokyo is being financed by the immense Genom Conglomerate. In recent years there have been growing acts of terrorism caused by the Buma, a group of bio-mechanical soldiers. To combat this threat, the Armor Defense Police (ADP) has been formed, equipped with fire power far superior to that of the standard branch of law enforcement. Along with the ADP, a mysterious vigilante group has surfaced, carrying with them the most highly advanced combat hardware. They patrol Mega-Tokyo, fighting evil under the code name "Knight Saber."

CHARACTERS

"THE GOOD GUYS"

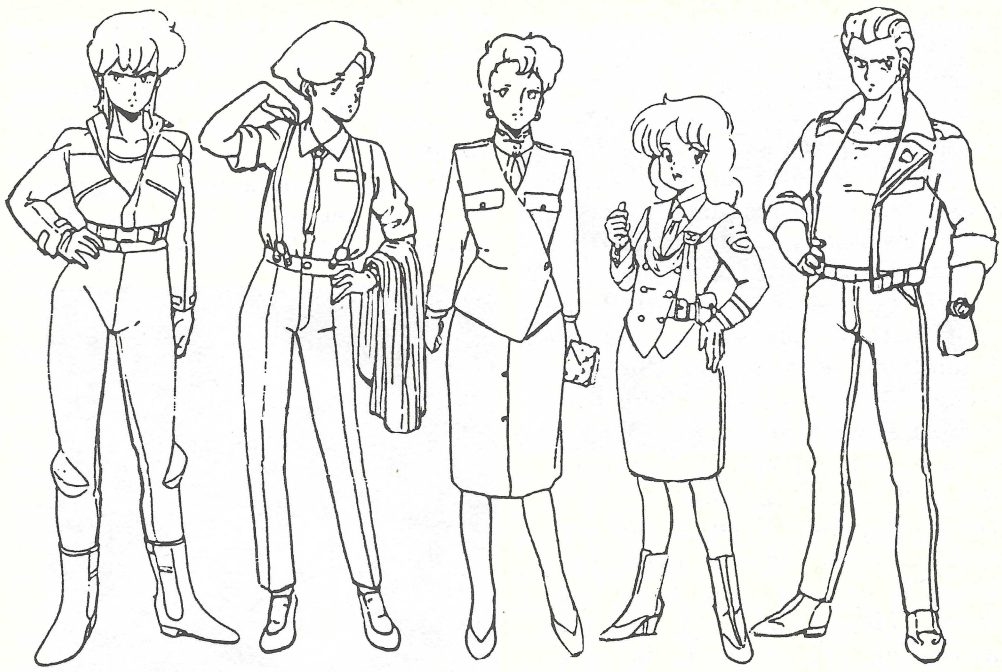
PRISS: A popular rock singer and the combat leader of the Knight Sabers. She is headstrong and harbors a slight resentment of the ADP.

CELIA: She has taken the technology her late father left her and turned it into the highly advanced hardsuits used by the Knight Sabers. She holds a personal grudge against the Buma for the death of her father. She runs the lingerie shop which serves as the front for the Knight Saber operations.

NENE: A dispatch operator for the ADP. She uses her position to inform the Knight Sabers of Buma attacks.

LINNA: An aerobics instructor. Her athletic ability and skill in hand-to-hand combat makes her an ideal choice for a member of the Knight Sabers.

LEON: A member of the ADP which has been assigned to the Buma incidents. He has a romantic interest in Priss.

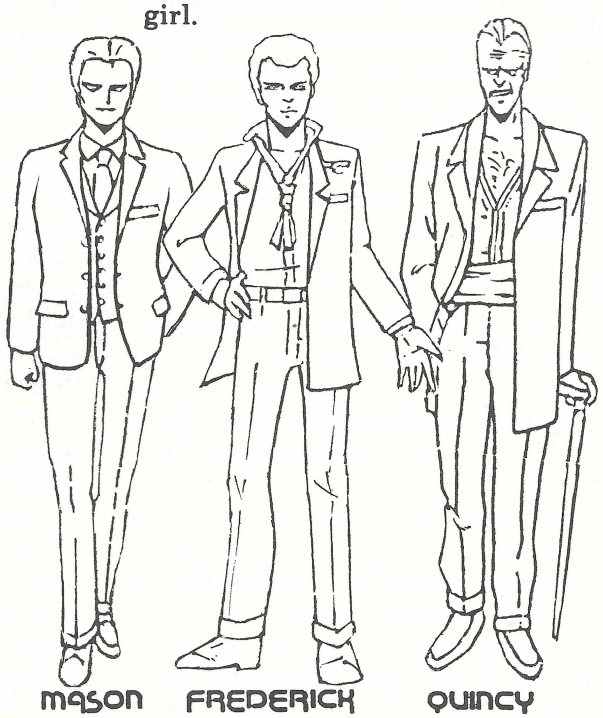


PRISS LINNA CELIA NENE LEON

MACKIE: Celia's little brother. He drives the support vehicle for the Knight Sabers, which is disguised as a delivery van. He doesn't seem to take the Buma as seriously as his sister.

CYNTHIA: A form of artificial life, similar to the Buma. She was created by the USSD as a secret satellite hook-up disguised as a six-year-old girl, and is apparently unaware that she is not a real live girl.

MACKIE CYNTHIA



MASON FREDERICK QUINCY

"THE BAD GUYS"

The Buma are a cross between man and machine. Celia's father originally created them to be deep space astronauts. They are capable of independent thought, and are nearly invulnerable to physical harm. Though not possessing a natural human appearance, they can disguise themselves as humans.

FREDERICK: A sort of super Buma with the ability to absorb all other mechanical matter. He is the leader of the Buma operation to kidnap Cynthia.

QUINCY: The President of the Genom Conglomerate and the secret leader of the entire Buma operation. He maintains a safe distance from all the dirty work being carried out by the Buma.

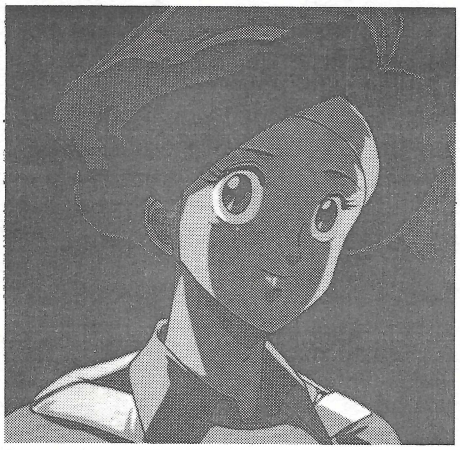
MASON: Quincy's right hand man, who handles the more "unclean" end of business at Genom. He makes sure that what Quincy wants done gets done. He is the man responsible for the death of Celia's father.

The Story:

Damaged buildings are being torn down as the Genom Conglomerate begins to replace what's left of Tokyo. The Buma attacks have become more and more frequent over the past few years, and the ADP is presently having a hard time with a new and more powerful Buma that is loose downtown. As the Buma soldier rampages the area, Nene calls for more back-up from the ADP central. Celia, who is back at home, picks up Nene's police call on her scanner and tells Linna to gather Priss at her concert. Linna signals Priss that there is trouble, and they both leave. Meanwhile Leon, who was attending the concert, is summoned as additional backup by his partner. As Leon is hurrying to the scene, he runs right into the middle of the fight and catches his first glimpse of the much rumored Knight Sabers in action. After a short battle, the Buma is destroyed, and Celia notes that this is a new type that they have never encountered before.

Later, Leon rides into a hamburger stand for a quick bite and sees Priss already parked outside. Recognizing Priss out of her stage attire, he starts up a conversation with her, introducing himself as an ADP officer. However, she quickly brushes him off, telling him she doesn't like cops and that if he has enough time to flirt with girls he should be protecting the civilians from the Buma.

The scene switches to the USSD headquarters where the general in charge and his aide are watching a video tape of the battle that occured downtown between the Knight Sabers and the new type of Buma. The general is very impressed with the Knight Saber's level of technology, and wants more data on their equipment. His assistant informs him that they work for money from time to time, and asks if the USSD should try to hire them. The general decides to kill two birds with one stone, agreeing to hire the Knight Sabers to correct the USSD's latest "mistake," losing some top secret hardware which the public must not find out about, and also to gather more technical info on the Knight Sabers' hardsuits.



The scene changes to Genom Tower. Quincy is on the phone with a political figure who has influence over foreign trade. The call concerns a foreign country that is interested in one of their products. Quincy says,"You do realize that the whole world wants Genom products—58% of all the automobiles in the world are made by Genom." Quincy pauses, listening to the man's request, and then says, "Attack Buma? They're very valuable to warring nations. . . . When we sell the Buma, it improves business and the country's economy. I'm sure if we help each other out, I can promise you the prime minister's chair." Quincy hangs up and turns to Mason.

Mason: The "Men" have carried out the collection you requested from the USSD.

Quincy: It will greatly improve Genom. It's something we really needed. Take good care of the cargo, it's very important.

Mason: In twenty-four hours it will be brought to you.

Quincy: Mason, I'm leaving everything to you. But remember, we [Genom] run a clean business here. Do not soil our name.

Mason: I understand.

Back at her apartment, Celia is relaxes in the pool. In a flashback scene, she remembers the event of her father's death. She also remembers receiving a videotape just after her father died. The videotape is encoded with some special signal that instantly endows her with all the information on her father's work—weapons systems, the Buma, and the hardsuits that Knight Saber now uses. The tape also reveals who was responsible for her father's death: Mason.

The next morning, Celia wakes up and her brother, Mackie, brings in the morning paper. He shows her an ad taken out by the USSD, requesting an audience with Knight Saber. Celia calls a meeting of Knight Saber at her lingerie shop to discuss the ad, which offers them a job for the incredible sum of 20 million. They assume that it has something to do with the break-in at USSD the same night as the Buma attack. They agree to at least go and see the USSD to find out more about the job. Celia asks Nene to come along to the USSD headquarters since she's already off work. In order to conceal their identities they go in "uniform."

The USSD is surprised that they have shown up in their hardsuits, and also that they are women. The general is immediately impressed by how much more advanced the Knight Sabers' hardsuits are than the USSD K-12 combat armor. He then goes on to tell the Knight Sabers about the job, which entails finding the location of a missing computer scientist named Frederick and a six year-old girl named Cynthia. He also says that Frederick had with him vital information regarding the SDI (Satellite Defense Initiative), which is armed with a laser powerful enough to destroy a large city. While the gener-

al is going over the details of the job, Nene's sensors reveal that they are being scanned. She notifies Celia on her com-link, and Celia destroys the scanner. As they both begin to leave, the general quickly apologizes and explains to them that the job really is legitimate and that they just wanted to know more about the people they were hiring.

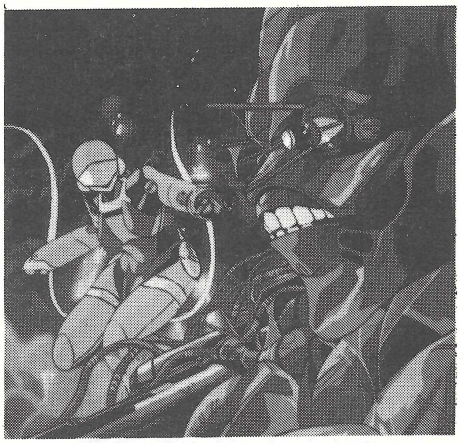
A little later, Celia holds another meeting to let everyone know what the job is about. She passes out photos of Frederick and Cynthia to everyone and says that if they should find anything they are to contact base and not to act on their own without backup. Priss is meanwhile checking the local hangouts to find out if anyone has seen the two missing people. Some of Mason's men find out that Frederick and Cynthia are being looked for. They proceed to capture Priss, attacking her in a phone booth while she is trying to contact Celia and knocking her unconscious. When she regains consciousness she overhears that Cynthia is being kept at the Floating City. She escapes her captors by stealing a racing bike, and speeds off toward the Floating City, being chased by a Buma. Leon, who was patrolling the area, sees Priss rocket by, followed by a Buma, and immediately joins pursuit. Meanwhile, the rest of the Knight Sabers are back at base, worried about why Priss hasn't checked in. Mackie picks up on the scanner that there is a stolen racing bike being chased by a Buma in the vicinity of the Floating City. Hearing this, they figure that it must be Priss. After a moment of consideration they decide to suit up.

The scene switches back to the Floating City, where Priss finds Cynthia drawing with chalk an incredibly precise map of Tokyo on the wall, along with Nene's trademark. Priss recognizes the trademark, but she can't remember where it is from. As Priss is trying to leave with Cynthia, they are stopped by a Buma and what appears to be three regular thugs. They start to beat Priss up, and after a while the Buma decides to fry Priss with his heat beam. However, one of the thugs stops him from spoiling their fun. As they discuss what to do with Priss, she pulls out a concealed gun and shoots the Buma. Seeing this, one of the thugs charges Priss, and Priss shoots her as well, but it turns out that the thug is really a Buma in disguise. The first Buma grabs Priss as she tries to reload, when suddenly Frederick shows up and starts to ask Priss about why she is looking for him and Cynthia. Priss is confused about what part Frederick really plays in this, and doesn't answer him. Frederick then reveals himself as part of the plot to kidnap Cynthia. He says, "USSD probably told you that I was a computer scientist," and tells Priss she obviously doesn't know what Cynthia really is. He also tells her that if she doesn't have anything else to say, there is no reason to keep her around.

Just as the Buma is about to kill Priss, the Knight Sabers appear and save her. Celia orders Priss to get away from the battle. Priss heads back toward the support van with Cynthia, but she is stopped by one of the Buma. As he starts to attack, Leon arrives on the scene and blows him away with an Anti-Buma gun. Leon says, "I suppose you'll go out with me now," and tells Priss to get away.

The rest of Frederick's men drop their human guise and attack the Knight Sabers. The girls make short work of the Buma, leaving only Frederick standing.

Frederick reveals himself as a Super Buma, absorbs the nearest downed Buma, and begins to attack all of the Knight Sabers singlehandedly. Frederick then starts to grow to an enormous size. As he



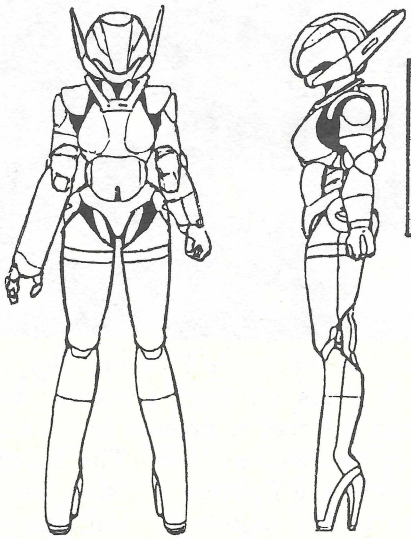
absorbs the entire Floating City, he cuts Priss off from Cynthia, and Priss is forced to proceed to the support van without her. The Knight Sabers are fighting a losing battle due to the seemingly limitless increase of Frederick's strength. Priss arrives with her bike and intells the rest of the group that she is going inside Frederick to destroy his inner control system. She combines with her bike into the Motoslave and enters Frederick. The Motoslave weaves around the interior defenses of this Giant Buma, finds the center where Fredrick's control system is and destroys it with its cannon. But even with his brain destroyed, Frederick's form continues to absorb everything mechanical in his path. Cynthia, who turns out to be an artificial lifeform linked directly to the SDI, is caught in Frederick's absorption. Before she is fully consumed, the satellite fires on the Floating City destroying everything on it. The Knight Sabers manage to get a safe distance away from the city before it explodes. They drive away, and Priss notices Leon running across the bridge that used to lead to the Floating City. Priss catches up with the rest of the Knight Sabers and they return home.

There are many loose ends and unanswered questions in Bubble Gum Crisis which should be answered in Bubble Gum Crisis Part 2.

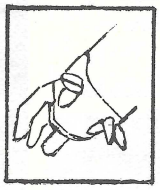
By Toshifumi Yoshida
Grant West

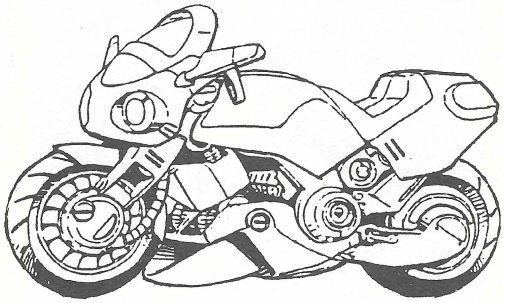
THE MECHANICS OF BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

HARDSUIT 'PRISS'

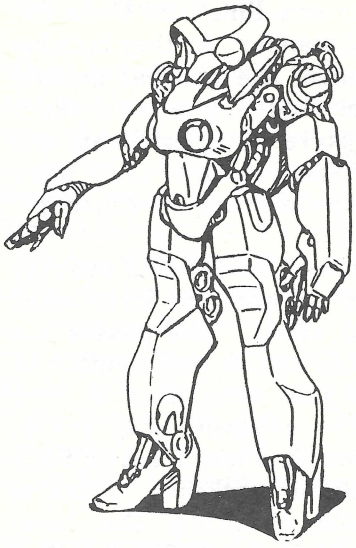


A blue suit with a red stripe, it is equipped with a right-arm mounted Rail Gun (an automatic pistol) and twin-needle guns (needle-thin projectiles). It has no flight pack, but can combine with the Motoslave cycle, transforming into a larger power armor suit. The Motoslave can also be remote-controlled from the Hardsuit.

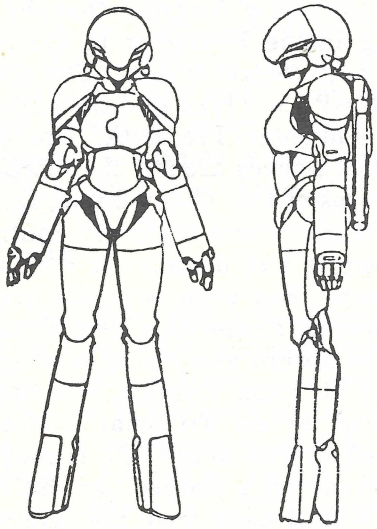




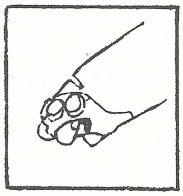
MOTOSLAVE

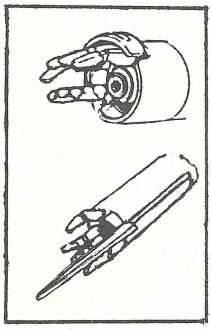


HARDSUIT 'CELIA'



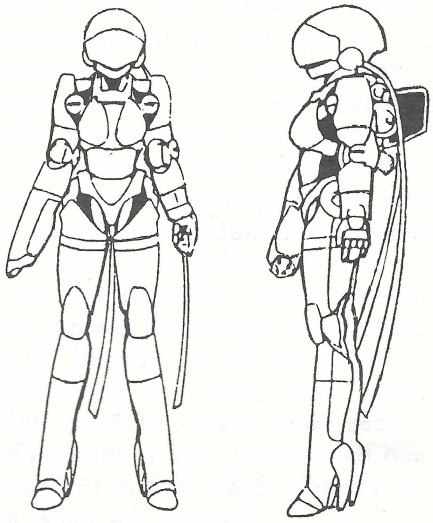
A light blue suit equiped with knuckle-bombers (contact energy discharge weapons) on both hands, a cannon on the left arm, and a laser sword on her right. It is also equipped with a flight pack.



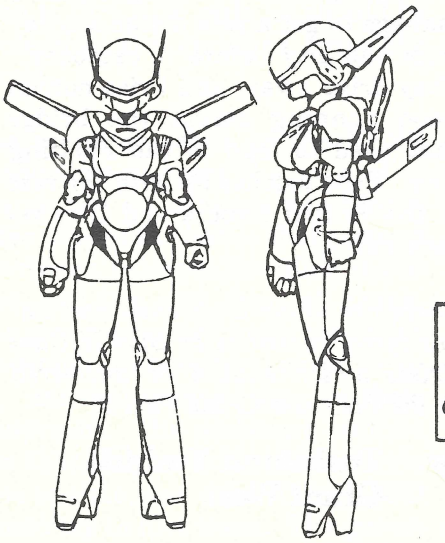


A green suit with two long ribbons trailing from its head. It is armed on the right arm with a triple barrel laser gun and a knuckle-bomber similar to Celia's. It has no armament on the left hand, but it has razor ribbon-cutters on the helmet and it also has a flight pack.

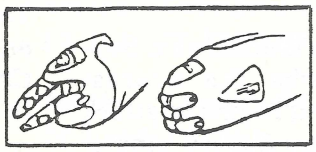
HARDSUIT 'LINNA'



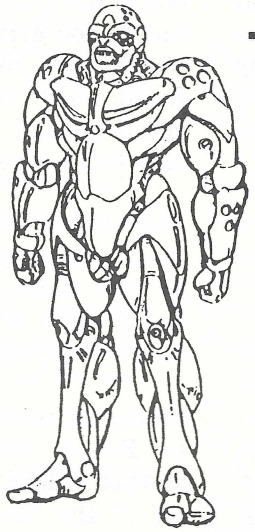
HARDSUIT 'NENE'

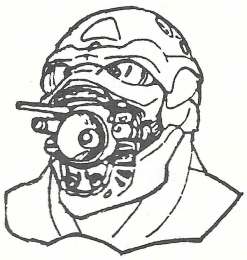


A blue suit with pink legs, it is the least combat-ready of the Hardsuits. Its only weapon is a multi-functional laser on the right arm. The suit has a flight pack and is equiped with ECM, a satellite link-up, and communication gear.



THE BUMA





The standard Buma have a laser-cannon in the mouth, and a limited ability to absorb mechanical matter. They have multiple jet nozzles for flight.

INTERVIEW: MR. Hideo Ogata

On August 7, 1987, Animag spoke with Mr. Hideo Ogata, Executive Editor of Animage Magazine. The following transcript was made possible with the help of Mr. Seiji Horibuchi of Viz Communications. Parts of the interview have been slightly rewritten into more colloquial English..

ANIMAG: How large is the circulation of Animage?

MR. OGATA: 250,000 copies every month.

ANIMAG: What is your actual job at Animage?

MR. OGATA: In October I will be executive editor in charge of publications, and there will be a new editor-in-chief of Animage magazine. I was editor-in-chief, but in my new job, I will be in charge of all publication produced by Animage.

ANIMAG: I would like to ask you about the recent trends in Japanese animation. To us here in America, it appears that the Japanese animation industry has fallen upon hard times. There are fewer shows than ever before, and several large animation stores have begun to close in Japan, such as Animec. In addition, some of the magazines have gone out of business, such as Globian and My Anime. Is this currently a bad time for animation in Japan?

MR. OGATA: Yes, it is. There are three current trends in Japanese animation. The first one is television, the second is movies, and the third is OVA (Original Video Animation). It used to be that TV animation was the mainstay, but now it is smaller. A couple of years ago in Tokyo alone there were 45 animation shows each week. Now it's only twenty shows each week. The main reason is that the sponsors of

TV animation were toy makers. Now, big corporations and businesses are getting shaky because of the Japanese yen to dollar rate. Many toy companies were exporting toys to the U.S., and now that the yen is getting so high, their businesses aren't doing so well, so they can't afford to sponsor the TV shows. Another reason for this decline is that the budget for TV animation is too small, compared to that of movies and videos, to allow the animators to satisfy their creativity.

ANIMAG: There also appears to be a big change just in the types of shows being produced. Most of the shows appear to be for little kids, or comedy oriented. The science-fiction and robot shows seem to be disappearing.

MR. OGATA: Robot titles are vanishing because the toy companies will not support them.

ANIMAG: There seems to be a lot more original animation videos coming out of Japan now, but the storylines of many of the original videos are like past Japanese animation.

MR. OGATA: There are two types of animation videos. One is where they make a video from an already existing character. The other is with a completely new character. With these, the creator and artists are still very young, so they still have a lot to learn. It is very hard for one original artist to write a story and create a character. Hayao Miyazaki, creator of Nausicaä, is one of the rare real talents who can create a story and create the art. It is not easy to find talented young people to do original videos. I expect that the current creators are still learning, and that videos will get better.

ANIMAG: Animage tends to focus more on the big budget films such as Nausicaä, Arion, Laputa, and Wings of Honneamise. Is this because they are the higher quality animation films, or maybe because Animage helps fund some of these productions?

MR. OGATA: Because these are our productions, we do cover these more than other films. However, Wings of Honneamise is not ours.

ANIMAG: You don't cover many of the original videos.

MR. OGATA: I'm expecting to see better original animation videos, but since there aren't very many, Animage can't cover it. The new management of Animage is thinking about putting together a comic or a novel in the magazine. Then we would make a video or animation movie from it ourselves.

ANIMAG: Many of the animation characters seem to be coming out of strange places, such as a series of models, like Gall Force, or Cruise Chase Blasty, which was a video game and looks as though it may soon be an animated production.

MR. OGATA: Hudson, a family computer game maker, is making an animation movie out of their game characters, but I don't know which game they're basing it on.

ANIMAG: A couple of last quick questions. Whatever happened to the new Yamato movie?

MR. OGATA: There was a plan for an animated movie featuring Deslar as the main character. But there have been five animated movies, and everyone says that's enough, so the plans for a new movie have disappeared.

ANIMAG: There was once a rumor in Japan about a follow-up TV show to Macross. Is there any truth to that?

MR. OGATA: The producer of Macross is a good friend of mine, and he has said that there will not be any more.

ANIMAG: Can you give us any idea if you will produce Animage in English for the United States?

MR. OGATA: I would love to do that. It is a dream, but there would be problems. First, books open the opposite way in America and Japan. Second, production costs would be very high to maintain the quality of printing as in Japan. The circulation would have to be as high as in Japan (250,000) in order to keep the cost low. Also, much of the information about the Japanese animation industry may not be of interest to American readers. So, Animag is doing what we hope to do.

ANIMAG: Is it true that you are trying to purchase the rights to Nausicaä back from the American company that has it, since the American version was done so poorly?

MR. OGATA: In Hong Kong, Laputa was released and it was the biggest hit in the history of animated film there. The same company has bought the full length Nausicaä and they will release it in Hong Kong. This Hong Kong company has approval from the American distributors, so there is a chance that this version will be shown here. We must wait and see.

ANIMAG: Is there anything you would like to say about Japanese animation?

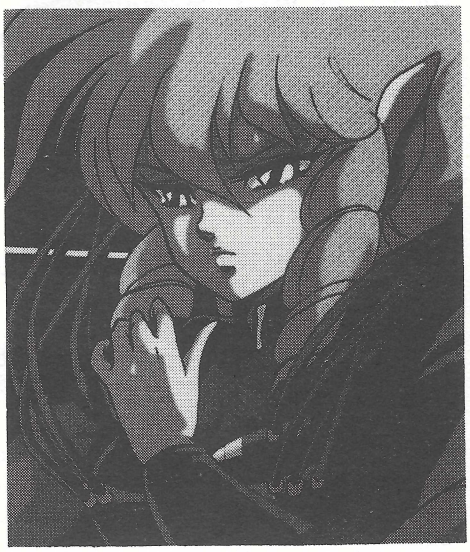
MR. OGATA: I would like to mention that one of the biggest new trends in Japanese animation is that many big publishers are trying to produce animation movies, such as Tokyo-Shoten and also Kodonsha, who are doing Akira, and Shin Jo Sha, another big company, and our parent company, Shogakukan, who are also making movies. I think this is a good thing. Printing corporations are putting out money to make movies, so the animation and print mediums are being combined to promote stories.

Although I cannot publish an English version of Animage in the near future, I'd like to publish one comic from it, such as Nausicaä. That's why I am visiting here now.

I'd also like to add that there is one big problem when animation comes to America: all the distributors want to make animation films 90 minutes long. 120 minutes does not sell, they say. I don't believe it. If it is a good movie, it should be its full length. I hope you support my idea.

Animag wishes to thank Mr. Ogata and Animage for their time and cooperation.

Nikaku Animart



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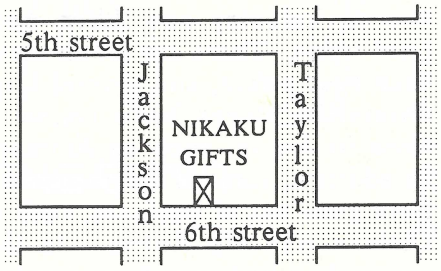

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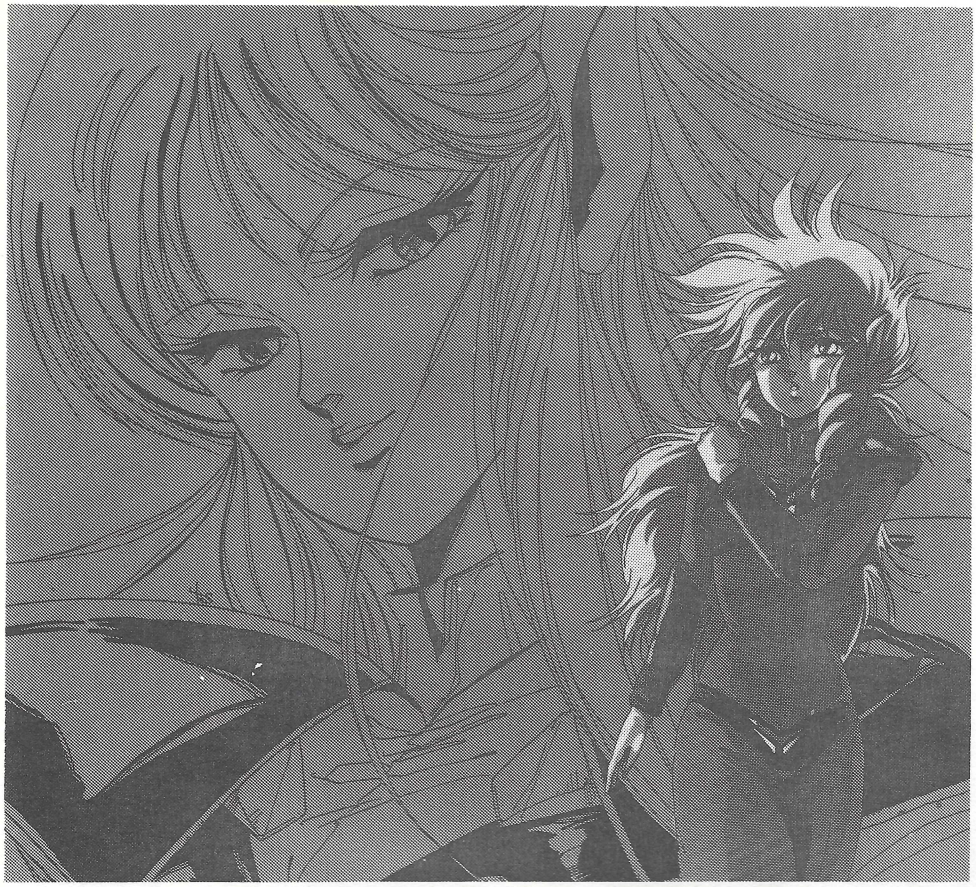

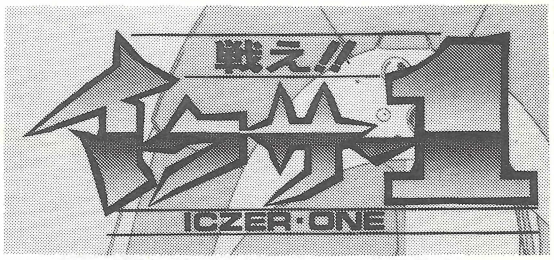

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ICZER 1

ACT II "The Challenge of Iczer Sigma"

Director and original comic by:
Toshihiro Hirano
U.S. Copyright:
Books Nippan 1987
Films by:
Studio Zweeben

The following is a continuation of the Fight Iczer 1 OAV series which started last issue.

Foreward:

In the story, Earth is under attack by the interstellar race of the *Cotuwolf. However, Earth has an unexpected savior in the enigmatic Iczer 1. With the help of her synchronizing partner Nagisa, an Earth girl, she hopes to save Earth from utter destruction.

ACT II

The Fortress Nova enters the Earth's atmosphere. It settles in the middle of downtown Tokyo, crushing everything beneath it. Inside the pyramid shaped fortress Cepia orders the Dilos Theta to be retrieved for analysis and that the Guoids be deployed to keep Iczer 1 occupied.

On a rooftop away from the object, Iczer 1 recognizes the pyramid as the Fortress of Cotuwolf and wonders what its purpose on Earth is. She returns to the pocket dimension where Iczer-Robo is kept. Nagisa is again connected to Iczer-Robo. Iczer 1 tells her that she intends to attack the Fortress with Iczer-Robo, and is counting on Nagisa. Nagisa replies that she does not want to fight. Iczer 1 is confused since the two of them had synchronized perfectly in the battle against the Dilos Theta. Nagisa yells that she does not understand what Iczer 1 means and again blames her for what has happened, demanding to be let out of Iczer-Robo.

At the United Defense Headquarters, there is a Code 1 alert. Both ground stations and the Wonder-3 satellite have detected an object behind the moon. They wait for an invasion to start.

Meanwhile, a lone technician adjusting some equipment in the Defense Headquarters is the first victim of a Bedem.

Cepia approaches the room where Cobalt's body is being kept. Afterwards, back in her quarters, Cepia mourns for her lost lover. Notified that Sir Violet has arrived at the fortress, she goes to see him. Sir Violet then gives her command of the fortress. She is also to be the pilot of the Iczer Sigma, currently being prepared. Sir Violet urges Cepia to direct her sadness and anger towards Iczer 1. Cepia responds by swearing to kill Iczer 1 in revenge for Cobalt's death. Lastly, Sir Violet tells Cepia that Big Gold is personally taking a hand in the matter, and that Cepia's partner will soon be born.

Iczer 1 and Nagisa materialize in Tokyo. Nagisa is wearing new clothes, which Iczer 1 says will protect her. Iczer 1 herself is going to infiltrate the fortress and learn their plans. While she is away, Nagisa is on her own. Iczer 1 says that the Bedems are increasing their takeovers. She must kill Big Gold to stop them. Iczer 1 readies herself to leave, promising that she will come back if Nagisa is ever in danger. But before Iczer 1 can teleport away, Nagisa asks, "Why did you pick me?" Iczer 1 replies, "Because I like you."

As Nagisa walks the city streets, she notices that it is deathly quiet. She wonders if anyone is still alive and free. Suddenly she is stopped by a policeman. He declares the area off-limits and tells Nagisa to come with him. She refuses and begins to run away. He grabs her, but as he does, an energetic force repels him. He is revealed as a Bedem, but the attack is stopped by a force field which surrounds Nagisa. Involuntarily, she raises her arm and from a bracelet fires a beam of energy which destroys the Bedem. In her mind, she remembers Iczer 1 saying, "The bracelet will protect you."

Running in blind panic, Nagisa finds herself back at home. She wonders why she came here, since her parents are dead. Suddenly she hears a little girl calling for her mother. The mother is lying face down on the street, the girl

shaking her. As Nagisa approaches to help, the little girl cries out, "Mommy is sick!" Nagisa helps the girl and her mother home.

Iczer 1 notices that the Dilos Theta has been retrieved and that another robot is undoubtedly being prepared. As she wonders how she will infiltrate the fortress, she is suddenly shifted into another dimension, a featureless plane. She is attacked by a Guoid with abilities similar to hers.

In the fortress, Cepia reports to Sir Violet that Iczer 1 has been trapped in the parallel dimension and that she and the Guoid are engaged in combat. Sir Violet, pleased, shows Cepia her new partner, Iczer 2.

Iczer 2 greets Cepia as a new friend. Sir Violet says that when Iczer 2 and Iczer Sigma combine, they will end the threat posed by Iczer 1.

Inside Saya's home, Nagisa listens to her story. She tells Nagisa that one day her husband suddenly turned into a monster. Saya then ran away with Sayoko, her daughter. Expecting to be disbelieved, she is surprised when Nagisa does believe her. Content merely to be with her mother, Sayoko falls asleep.

The soldiers of Fuji Base are powerless to stop the Bedem-controlled soldiers. On the Governor's orders, the Fujiyama Defense force prepares to take off for the fortress. The ship lifts off through the closed main hatch. It then releases its fighters, which strafe the fortress. Simultaneously, the ground forces prepare the Heat Wave Cannon.

The dimensions around Iczer 1 shift and she finds herself on a maze of platforms. She and the Guoid now duel with energy blasts. Finally, Iczer 1 finds the Guoid's weak spot and destroys it.

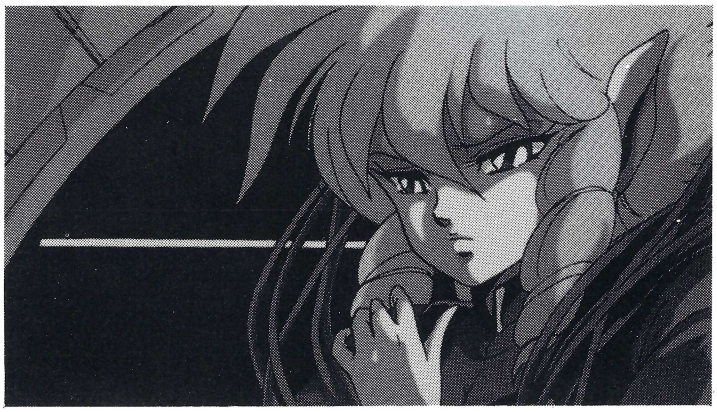
As soon as the Guoid explodes, the dimensions shift again. Iczer 1 finds herself on a grassy plain. The Guoid, running very rapidly, collides with her, knocking her down.

The regular ordnance useless, the Fujiyama Defense force fires its Cold Wave Cannon, then orders the ground forces to use their Heat Wave Cannon. Neither beam, nor the combination, seem to have any effect.

Sayoko wakes up, startling Nagisa. She leads Nagisa upstairs to her parent's room. As soon as she enters, the door slams behind her. As Sayoko frantically tries to open the door, a large hand reaches up from the floor and grabs Nagisa. Then , a giant mouth emergesfrom the wall. Saya, awakening to Sayoko's voice, starts to go to her, but a hand reaches from the floor and pins her. Terrified, Nagisa calls to Iczer 1 for help. She hears Iczer 1's voice urging her to fight. Nagisa's thoughts for Sayoko's safety give her the will to fight. Using the bracelet, she destroys the monster and comforts Sayoko.

Cepia, tired of the distractions of the Earth inhabitants, orders them shot down. First the fighters, then the ground forces, and finally the Fujiyama Defense force are destroyed. However, an aide tells Cepia that the explosion of the main ship has affected the parallel dimension they have created. Iczer 1 may be able to escape.

As predicted, Iczer 1 and the remaining Guoid shift back into the streets of Tokyo. Throwing her sword, she dispatches the Guoid. Then out from the darkness walks a shadow: Iczer 2.



She greets Iczer 1 as her sister. When Iczer 1 shows surprise, she explains that she is also the daughter of Big Gold. "I have been created to destroy you," she says, and they begin their duel with laser swords. Quickly, Iczer 2 disarms Iczer 1. Iczer 1 shifts to energy bolts, but she is knocked into a building by a bolt from Iczer 2. She taunts Iczer 1, threatening to shoot her if she doesn't stand up. They continue the fight until Iczer 1 is wounded in the shoulder by a blast from Iczer 2.

Nagisa and Sayoko watch in horror as Saya shows signs of having been taken over by a Bedem. As she reaches out for them, the force field clicks on. It protects the two of them, but more monsters begin to materialize in the room.

Iczer 2 approaches the wounded Iczer 1. Saying "This is it!" she grabs Iczer 1 by the wounded shoulder and lifts her up.

Nagisa desperately tries to save Sayoko and herself. She attempts to call on the bracelet, asking for a great power to destroy the monsters. The bracelet disintegrates the monsters, but it also translates them into the pocket dimension containing Iczer-Robo.

Iczer 2 notices that Iczer-Robo is waiting for its pilot. Saying that Iczer 1's partner is calling and that she should synchronize with her, Iczer 2 releases Iczer 1. Before she leaves, Iczer 2 says that she has promised Cepia that Iczer Sigma will deliver the final blow. Then she teleports away.

Teleporting inside the cockpit of Iczer Robo, Iczer 1 asks Nagisa, who is already inside her energy bubble, if she called Iczer-Robo. Nagisa reluctantly says that she is ready to fight now.

The Iczer Sigma appears a distance away. Iczer 2 tells Cepia that her powers are far stronger than those of the puny Earth girl. Cepia responds that she is ready to destroy Iczer 1 and avenge Cobalt.

Iczer 1 wonders to herself how she can effectively fight with her wounded shoulder, but she takes courage from Nagisa's abilities and determination. Nagisa vows that she is through running and that she will save Sayoko, who is wearing Nagisa's bracelet, and the Earth.

As the two mighty behemoths face off for their climactic battle, the narrator speaks: "At last Big Gold has played his trump card, Iczer Sigma. Can Iczer-Robo stand up to this frightening power? Can Iczer 1 defeat the demonic Iczer 2? What will happen to Nagisa and Sayoko? What is the Earth's destiny? Have courage, Nagisa. Fight! Iczer 1"

By Jeff Okamoto
Taka Nagatani

*By request of Books Nippon (copyright owner in U.S.) Cthulhu has been changed to Cotuwolf.

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Back Page Comments.....

You readers must be wondering what happened to the second issue of Animag. Namely, why aren't Zeta Gundam, Dirty Pair and Lupin in this issue. First, Lupin has been postponed to a later issue because of space limitations. Second, at this moment Animag is currently waiting for formal permission from Nippon Sunrise to print articles on their shows. Zeta Gundam and Dirty Pair will be featured in upcoming issues of Animag. We will keep you posted.

There are many changes in this issue of Animag: more pages, color, more original art, and two fold-out posters. In addition, we are presenting more in-depth articles covering not only the shows but the people who bring them to you. As a result of these changes we have been forced to raise the price of Animag to $3.00. Color is not cheap. This leads into a subject brought up by most people who have written us: subscriptions. First off, please don't send any money yet: we are currently preparing our subscription policy. That doesn't mean you still can't order individual issues. Issue 1 is still available at $2.50 and Issue 2 at $3.00.

Several readers have asked us how we obtain our information. All articles are thoroughly researched by our on-staff translators. None of our information is made up. We strive to be as accurate as possible compiling our information from multiple sources. At this point we would like to thank several Japanese companies for their help and understanding: Animage Magazine, Bandai's B-Club, and Space Magazine Uchusen. They have helped us by providing advice and assistance without which we could not continue to improve the quality of Animag.

Considering these standards, we would like to state our submission policy:

1. Send photocopies of artwork or articles. We cannot return submissions.
2. All submissions are subject to editorial change.
3. Printed submissions are copyright Animag Magazine and may not be printed in their exact form elsewhere.

One last item before we sign off: Animag needs to pick your brains. So if you could answer the questionnaire below we would really appreciate it. Somebody out there told us once that there are less than 1,000 Japanese Animation fans in America. Help prove somebody wrong and send us your answers.

1. NAME: AGE: SEX: M F OCCUPATION:
   ADDRESS:
   CITY: STATE: ZIP:
2. Do you belong to an animation club? If yes, which one?
3. How did you become interested in Japanese animation?
4. What are your three favorite T.V. shows.
5. What are your three favorite movies or OAV (original animation video)?
6. What are the three Manga (comics) you would most like to see translated?
7. What T.V. series, movie or OAVwould you most like to see dubbed in English?
8. What did you like best about Animag?
9. What did you like least about Animag?
10. What would you like to see Animag cover in future issues?
11. How did you find out about Animag?

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